United Nations E/CN.5/1999/11

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
6 January 1999

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Thirty-seventh session
9-19 February 1999
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development: priority themes: social services for all

Letter dated 21 December 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the report of the International Expert Meeting on Social Services for All, which was held at Frankfurt, Germany, from 14 to 16 October 1998 (see annex).

The Expert Meeting was organized by the German Association for Public and Private Welfare and hosted by Germany as a European initiative to the regional follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen. Thirty-nine experts from the 15 Member States of the European Union, the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the United Nations Secretariat, who work in public authorities, non-governmental organizations, voluntary organizations or research and science, participated in their personal capacity.

The objective of the Expert Meeting was to provide the Commission for Social Development with a stimulating background document on the situation and possible future of social services in the European Union in order to enrich the global reflections on the issue and to serve as an example of transnational and regional analysis.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the thirty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development under agenda item 3 (a) (i).

(*Signed*) Dieter **Kastrup**

* E/CN.5/1999/1.

99-00329 (E) 150199

Annex

EXPERT MEETING

"SOCIAL SERVICES FOR ALL"

Frankfurt/Main 14-16 October 1998

REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE MEETING

The World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, Denmark in March 1995, was the first major United Nations conference specifically targeted on social development issues. The Summit brought together 117 heads of State of Government - the largest number of world leaders which ever met - to agree on a new global social contract which places people at the centre of development by making the conquest of poverty, the goal of full employment and the furthering of stable, safe and just societies the overriding objectives of the international community.

The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development with its ten groundbreaking commitments and the Program of Action which outlines policies, actions and measures to implement the commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration - both adopted by the 186 countries attending the Social Summit - intend to create, in a framework of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, a national and international environment favourable to social development, to eradicate poverty, to enhance productive employment and reduce unemployment, and to foster social integration.

While the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Copenhagen Program of Action lies primarily in the responsibility of each country, the United Nations institutions and specialised agencies are committed to providing support for such efforts. Particularly the UN Commission for Social Development has been mandated by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to deal with the follow-up to the Social Summit. Since 1996 the Commission for Social Development monitors progress made in the implementation of the Copenhagen agreements, the effectiveness of corresponding policies and strategies, as well as problems or obstacles encountered. It does so by receiving and appraising voluntarily submitted national reports from Governments and by executing, at its annual sessions, a multi-year programme of work for the consideration of priority subjects. Thus the Commission had the eradication of poverty on the agenda of its special session in 1996, it dealt with productive employment and sustainable livelihoods in 1997 and discussed in 1998 ways and means to promoting social integration and the participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.

For the annual February session 1999 the priority theme of the Commission for Social Development has been defined as "Social Services for All" taking into account that most of the Copenhagen commitments require adequate, effective and efficient social services meeting basic human needs. In fact, the Program of Action of the World Summit for Social Development provides a general framework for the topic by recalling that 'The well-being of people ... requires the exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, access to the provision of good education, health care and other basic public services, and the development of harmonious relations within communities. Social integration, or the capacity of people to live together with full respect for the dignity of each individual, the common good, pluralism and diversity, non-violence and solidarity, as well as their ability to participate in social, cultural, economic and political life, encompasses all aspects of social development and all policies. It requires the protection of the weak, as well as the right to differ, to create and to innovate. It calls for a sound economic environment, as well as for cultures based on freedom and responsibility. It also calls for the full involvement of both the State and civil society'.

In a world where a great number of people still do not have sufficient food, and even more suffer from malnutrition, where many people lack ready access to safe water supplies, where

unemployment and under-employment are on a high level, and growing in many countries, and where an increasing number of people suffer from absolute poverty - just to mention some of the basic socio-economic challenges - the provision of social services for all is crucial for the world-wide social development and maintenance of peace in the future.

According to the spirit of Copenhagen social services have to be considered under the guiding principles of universality, equal access, needs-based and client-oriented as well as responsive to the needs of the poor and disadvantaged or specific population groups. A number of main issues, which cut across sectors, like organisation, delivery, financing and evaluation are to be examined and recommendations made for further policies, strategies and action.

The development of social services for all is a strategic step for economic and social development in the world. The concept and definition of "social services", however, is different according to the political, economic, social and cultural context. It is therefore necessary to clarify the basic terms and the understanding of "social services ". The definition of social services by the UN is based on a broad concept. In the spirit of the UN World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, services relating to the following sectors should be included: education, health, food and nutrition, safe water, sanitation, and social welfare. Social services may be classified in three broad categories:

1. meeting essential needs of the entire population, relevant at all times (education and training, information, health, food, security, shelter, clean water, sanitation, personal safety and access to the law and legal protection),

2. appropriate to different stages in the life-cycle or life-span, e.g. infancy and childhood, adolescence and youth, economically active years, retirement, advanced old age,

3. services and support required by population groups with specific needs, e.g. disabled persons, indigenous people, migrants, low income large families, the destitute, offenders and delinquents, addicts, victims of crime or violence etc.

In social development matters Western European society constitutes an interesting case. After the progressive weakening and even breakdown of traditional forms of economic solidarity and social cohesion through the effects of the industrial revolution, the first modern social security system was conceived and introduced here in the late 19th century and, some decades later, the notion of the 'welfare state' became a guiding concept of most Western European countries. Social services provided by State and by voluntary organisations in various mixes have traditionally been considered as an essential element of the concept of the social State and have generally reached a high level in terms of coverage, specialisation, quality and effectiveness.

However, as Western European society changes rapidly these days as to its composition, 'ideologies' and priorities - partly due to new challenges like an ageing population, the globalisation of the economy, European integration and the information society - and as financial constraints set obvious limitations to generous planning, various and serious problems have to be resolved and new innovative responses to be developed in the area of social services.

Thus it seems legitimate and appropriate to share the experience of Western European society in the domain of social services - its strengths, its problems and its challenges - with other parts of the world in the framework of the next substantive debate of the Commission for Social Development in February 1999 on,"Social Services for All".

As Germany will assume the Presidency of the European Union at that time and consequently act as porte parole of the Union in the Commission for Social Development, the German Government has decided to sponsor a meeting of European experts on the issue of "Social Services for All in the European Union" to be organised by the German Association for Public and Private Welfare in Frankfurt in October 1998. Two experts from each of the 15 Member States of the European Union were invited strictly in their personal capacity and did not represent government opinion. They work in either public authorities - on national, regional or local- level, in voluntary organisations or in research and science.

The present report of the expert meeting in Frankfurt is designed to provide a stimulating background documentation on the situation and possible future of social services in the European Union to the Commission for Social Development in order to enrich the global reflections on the issue and to serve as an example of transnational, regional analysis.

It is evident that for the European Union the definition of social services has to be focused on services particularly relevant to the needs and social problems of European citizens. Social services as part of the wider context of social policy aim at social integration and social participation of people excluded from community life or at the peril of exclusion. It is obvious that specific needs are of higher priority in the European Union than others like, for example:

- poverty - defined by the European Union as meaning "persons, families and groups of persons whose resources (material, cultural and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in the Member State in which they live" (Commission of the EC, European File 4 / 87, Brussels 1987, page 3),
- unemployment - about 20 million people are officially unemployed, 8 million of them long-term unemployed,
- social exclusion of marginal groups and ethnic minorities,
- social disadvantages of various social groups like homeless people, refugees, disabled persons, etc.,
- lack on information on social rights and benefits,
- illiteracy,
- inadequate implementation of social rights.

In the 15 Member States of the European Union, social services are organised in different ways and carried out by various institutions. The State, non-profit organisations, for-profit organisations, volunteers as well as basic social institutions like family and kinship are delivering social services. Persons and groups benefiting from social services live in a large variety of situations: at home or in institutions, alone or in their families, relatively independent (e.g. young people) or totally dependent (heavily handicapped and severely ill persons), equipped with basic resources (e.g. home, income) or extreme poor (homeless and ill). The type of service ranges from a professional, hi-tech supported institutional care to just an informal help by a relative.

Even though social services in the various Member States of the European Union are somewhat differently conceived and organised, there is a common understanding that we mean personal social services excluding general (public) services like clean water etc., education, social security systems, the health care system and other general provisions.

2. CHALLENGES TO SOCIAL SERVICES

Despite a tremendous growth of economic development and social security during the last decades, disparities in levels of social development and wealth have grown. Until now the social systems in Western European countries have proved their strength by providing social services and social security adequate to most economic risks which citizens may encounter. The social development of Europe as an integrated part of European integration plays an essential role to safeguard the success of economic integration and political stability. The following challenges affecting the state, non-profit organisations, for-profit organisations, volunteers as well as basic social institutions like family and kinship have been identified as issues of topical relevance across EU Member States by the participants of the European Expert Meeting.

Migration

Migration within and into the European Union seems to be one of those urgent challenges affecting social services to a considerable extent. Migration or mobility may lead to a migration of poverty. In addition, people of different ethnic origins and cultural backgrounds define a different demand with regard to the performance and quality of social services, and express new and different needs from different cultural perspectives.

These developments have several consequences. The number of people in need of social services is increasing while at the same time those contributing to the financing of social services are decreasing and budgets are cut down. At the same time social services are confronted with different needs due to the cultural background of the migrants. Staff and social workers are not adequately prepared to answer the specific needs of new target groups. Both staff and migrants often lack language skills and intercultural competencies. Furthermore, the recruiting of staff does not reflect changing multicultural societies.

Although the need to adapt social services to changing users' expectations has clearly been identified it is stressed that offering social services, especially for certain target groups, bears the risk of marginalisation and segregation, especially in those European countries which show a rather homogenous cultural background of the population.

As the migration across European countries becomes easier and more frequent, there will be a need to break down complex administrative and bureaucratic barriers in order to guarantee equal access to social services.

Financial Resources

The financial constraints of public budgets will create a growing pressure to achieve reduction of costs of social transfers and services. An important increase of impact and efficiency of social services will be expected. One of the reasons for this discussion are demographic changes such as the ageing of population (see below). In most Member States the input-output relation, the balance of costs and benefits with regard to social services, is one of the main identified challenges. Economising or commercialising social services are consequences which will be dealt with in the next section of this report.

Competition

In the context of the growing predominance of the market economy ideology, social services are increasingly considered as being similar to other economic services. Commercialising social services - as a means to meet financial constraints and in order to create more economic and financial

responsibility - can result in greater competition among social services providers. Detailed responses to this pressure to commercialise European social services are discussed in some detail in the next section of the report.

Co-operation

Despite increasing competition among social services providers the necessity to co-operate rises at the same time. In some Member States (eg. Austria) there is even the legal requirement to network. Co-operation can help providers to save resources of staff, time, knowledge, money, technical means etc. From the users point of view co-operation can mean improving the quality of social services through the adoption of more holistic approaches, and innovations such as the use of 'one-stop-shops'. The challenge to suppliers of social services is to demonstrate both a commitment and competence to build strategic alliances and networks.

Job Creation

Social services and the third sector are increasingly concerned with the subject of fighting unemployment. A high priority of the European Union's social policy is to create employment opportunities for marginalised groups in particular. This is evident in the aims and criteria of many of their newer social programmes. There is a growing focus on the links between social services and other public and non-governmental organisations concerned with employment. It is expected that this development will create many new jobs as many municipalities put greater emphasis on job creation in the field of social services.

Empowerment of the Individual

A new paradigm in social policy arises which shifts from the traditional concept of the welfare state to a concept of more individual responsibility. Empowerment of the individual is definitely one of the major challenges which social services are facing. Interestingly, this emphasis on the responsibility and empowerment of the individual comes not just from a more conservative political ideology, but also from a grass roots, libertarian interest. Demanding more from the individual is completely in accordance with an individualistic society, but there is a risk that such a development may foster egoism and neglect solidarity among people.

Unemployment

The challenge to social services to create employment has been referred to above. A high level of unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment, has major negative effects on the basis of the welfare state (eg. financing social security systems, increasing costs for social provision). The widespread reality fact that increasing numbers of people are living on social benefit is undoubtedly one of the major challenges most European countries face. While the work force - those contributing to the social security system - decreases, the number of people requiring social services increases. High unemployment and under-employment undermine social cohesion and weaken social stability, resulting in economic, social and psychic deprivation.

Demographic and Social Changes

The ageing of European populations is regarded as of great importance with regard to both quantitative and qualitative aspects of social services. This topic is referred to below. Another challenge within the context of demographic and social changes is the substantial change in the structures of households (family structures) across the European Union. Due to factors such as changing life models and divorce there are considerably more lone-parent-families. They have

specific needs which social services have to meet, including childcare facilities, financial needs, suitable employment for single mothers especially, and adequate social benefits.

Participants at the Frankfurt meeting noted that as there are higher numbers of women entering the workforce, their availability as a resource for volunteers is decreasing. The increasing level of employment of women outside the home also affects the family as a basic social institution, with major implications for childcare and care for elderly relatives.

Ageing Populations

The ageing of European societies will result in the relation between active and non-active persons changing from 4:1 in 1996 to 3:1 in 2020. Furthermore, the percentage of people older than 75 years among elderly persons will grow from today 40% to 47% by the end of 2010. These dramatic demographic changes will create a much greater demand for social services. In addition, the ageing of the population is changing the systems of long-term care to a great extent. A major concern now in all countries is how can long-term care for elderly people be provided and financed. This subject is discussed in some detail in the next section of the report.

New Values

New values, in particular among the younger generations in Europe, challenge existing structures and regulations in the social sector. People want more participation and power regarding the scope and quality of social services, paternalistic systems being less accepted now by service users and their families. This movement has considerable implications for the way we conceptualise and organise social services. This is considered further later in the report.

3. COUNTRIES' RESPONSES TO THE CHALLENGES FACING SOCIAL SERVICES

Participants at the Expert Meeting identified several broad policy directions adopted by many European countries to counter the principal challenges to social services discussed in the previous section. These responses are mainly designed to introduce **innovations in services**, often with a cost-effective emphasis; to **reduce costs**; and to **modernise social services**. Of course, there are variations in responses adopted by individual countries, depending on factors such as their social, economic and social situations. The picture is that all European countries face similar challenges in the field of social services but each country has its own unique starting point, history and development of social services.

The main policy and service responses discussed by participants are now considered in outline. Some further details are found in section 5 of this report which deals with substantive topics.

The Future of Welfare Debate

The context for understanding responses to challenges for social services is the intense concern and debate in Europe and other parts of the world over 'the future of welfare'. This debate goes back to the 1970s when the first oil crisis raised serious problems for countries' ability to continue high levels of public expenditure. Subsequent periods of economic recession (eg. the current one); the impact of increasing economic globalisation with its pressure to reduce production costs; and a tendency towards greater conservatism in politics have all raised fundamental questions for welfare and how it should be paid for.

This debate over welfare concerns not only the future for social services but all aspects of social insurance and social assistance payments. Interestingly, public opinion surveys show that there remains a high level of citizen support for well funded, quality public welfare services - but less support for relatively high levels of taxation to pay for them. For both economic and political reasons governments in Europe are looking for ways of reducing their direct spending on welfare of all kinds and transferring costs elsewhere eg. private rather than state retirement pensions.

The Development of 'Mixed Economies of Social Services'

The implications of this widespread re-think on welfare for social services are considerable. Participants explained how
their countries are, in various ways, now developing mixed economies of social services. The main aim is reduce the responsibility of governments at all levels for both financing and directly providing social services. Families, non-governmental groups and organisations, and commercial social services agencies are encouraged to take on a much greater role in social service provision and financing.

To varying degrees these three sectors have always made significant contributions to social care and support - especially families - but this will be even more pronounced in the future. Elsewhere in this report we refer to some of the specific aspects of this shift to mixed economies of social services eg. new emphasis on the role of the state/public authorities as enablers rather than providers; transfer of costs to service users through increased charges. This reduction in financing and provision by the state is most noticeable in countries like Sweden and Denmark with their tradition of high taxation and comprehensive state social services. Other countries such as Germany and the Netherlands have always had a very mixed provider system but with the state responsible for financing a high proportion of the costs of services provided by non-governmental organisations.

Universal versus Selective Services, and Targeting

As a central part of this widespread re-think on welfare previous principles of universal services for all by right are under review. The argument is that universal services for all (eg. child allowances regardless of parental income) are simply too expensive for heavily constrained government budgets. Instead, limited public funds for welfare, including social services, should be targeted on people in greatest need. This change requires the use of means-testing, a system which research evidence demonstrates has the effect of deterring many people in need from applying for both cash and social service assistance.

In social services this shift to targeting services is seen particularly in residential and home-based services for elderly people. In the previous section of the report we considered the serious implications for social services of ageing populations in Europe. Residential care is particularly expensive so that governments are experimenting with new ways of maintaining elderly people in their own homes through community care policies, as well as concentrating all forms of social care provision on elderly people assessed as most in need - and unable to pay for services themselves. It is in care of elderly people that we see the greatest increase in commercial provision in many European countries as more and more people have to pay for services received.

Introduction of Economic and Commercial Concepts and Methods in Social Services

There is a clear tendency in our countries for social services to become more 'business like'. The language of social workers and other personnel is changing as they become familiar with terms such as 'cost effectiveness', 'performance indicators', 'value for money' and 'contracting'. A central aim of what is in effect a major cultural change in social services is to introduce methods from business to

ensure that public organisations especially make the most efficient and effective use of their limited budgets. It is argued that traditionally these agencies and their staff have had too little understanding and concern for budgets and costs, a tradition that must change quickly in this era of increasing demand and limited resources for social services.

In some countries substantial research is conducted into more cost effective ways of providing services. For example, a major study in the UK into cost effective ways of keeping dependent elderly people in their own homes demonstrated that by giving specially trained social workers budgets for home-based services, these people could be kept out of expensive residential care for significant periods. This approach is cost effective in that care costs were reduced and the elderly people concerned enjoyed a better quality of life than similar elderly people admitted to residential care. This study has had a major impact on British community care policy, legislation and practice.

Based partly on American experience and projects such as the one above, some European countries (eg. France, the Netherlands, UK) have introduced **case or care management** approaches to service provision. This is particularly so in services for older and disabled people but more recently care management is used in certain services for children and families. A care manager is usually, but not always, a social worker who assesses the needs of a user, designs a package of care service based on those needs, and then manages the implementation of the services. The care manager her/himself may not provide a direct regular service
to the user, a rather different role from traditional social work casework or counselling.

Care managers normally work within explicit budgets, with social services resources targeted on users with greatest needs. Following the initial assessment some people may be refused service by the public social services agency because either their needs are not great enough, or their income is sufficient for them to purchase services elsewhere.

Contracting is another example of this introduction of economic and business activities into social services. It is very extensively developed in the USA where public welfare agencies contract with many not-for-profit and for-profit providers, but contracting is less well known in many European countries. That is changing, more so in some countries than others. In developing mixed economies of social services public agencies and their staff are moving from traditions of giving annual grants to NGOs to the much more business orientated system of setting up formal contracts, with tightly drawn service specifications in return for sometimes very substantial contracts.

This shift to contracting by public agencies has considerable implications for the training of their staff, and raises some concerns. Certainly social work training has given very little attention to business methods, so that existing staff require new training in these methods. As section 5 of this report shows in the discussion of **Quality**, there is a concern that in the drive to reduce costs through competition and contracting there will be less control over service quality. Vulnerable service users, such as elderly people and people with learning difficulties, may suffer as a result.

The introduction of **markets and competition** in social services is yet another example of the introduction of economic and business methods into social services. Discussion at the Frankfurt meeting showed that this innovation is more evident in some countries than others. Participants had reservations over the extent to which markets and competition could properly be introduced into social services. The dangers to service quality of contracts based on systems of competitive tendering have already been mentioned. The research literature refers to 'quasi-markets' in social services, suggesting a half-way approach to encouraging competition and the creation of markets in this field. In other words, markets and competition should be carefully controlled to achieve an acceptable balance of cost reduction and maintenance of well defined and assured service standards.

In conclusion to this section, participants expressed a general note of caution over too great an enthusiasm for the wholesale importation of the concepts and practices from business and commerce into the social services field. As has been demonstrated in the cost effectiveness example in community care, properly conducted innovations can produce positive results for budget constrained public organisations, and for their service users. This is a good model for how we should proceed in what is still a relatively uncertain and rather controversial area of social services.

Prevention and Developing the Care Capacities of Communities

Eventually most discussions of the future of social services will turn to the subject of the importance of prevention, and this was so at the Frankfurt meeting. Prevention was considered in two aspects: preventing the development of social and personal problems that social services have to respond to; and prevention in the sense that communities and individuals can be helped to deal with many of their own needs and problems, without having to turn to social services agencies.

Of course, we all agree that prevention in both senses is 'a good thing'. The difficulty is that we are much less certain what prevention means in actual practice, what is to be done by whom to prevent which problems developing, and what evidence there is that certain policies and practices do directly prevent problems from developing. Evidence for the effectiveness of prevention programmes is quite difficult to obtain.

However, in their public and non-governmental social services most countries adopt some variation of a community development approach as part of a prevention strategy. Social workers/community development workers are employed not to work directly with individual users but instead to assist the development of a variety of self-help or community action groups. France particularly has a long history of this style of work. The encouragement of volunteering is an example of work by social services to develop the capacity of local communities to meet local needs without depending on (expensive) public services.

4. SUBSTANTIVE SUBJECTS

a) The role of the state and other actors in the field of social services

The historical roots of social services are twofold: partly citizens initiated social services themselves (voluntary groups, self-help groups), partly the state has started with the provision of social services. The establishment of a developed system of social services is an achievement of the modern welfare state. Therefore, to meet the new challenges emerging from the social development the state should take over an active role in ensuring and improving social services.

The ways how the state can fulfil this task may be different. However, it seems to be evident that the state should:

- Create and ensure a legal framework enabling the social services to achieve their goals
- Guarantee equal access for all social groups and throughout the country
- Guarantee social rights and minimum standards
- Ensure an adequate financing of social services,
- Organise that quality of social services is given and developed, e g. by a minimum qualification standard of staff, and
- Set up and organise rules for competition and the social market.

These tasks could be carried out at different levels of the state: national, regional and local. A more decentralised system allows more flexibility and adaptation to local and regional needs. The forms of decentralisation can be different, but the responsibilities should be clearly assigned to the different levels and not be fragmented.

There is, however, a strong notion of the fact that the state should not create and implement the whole range of social services. The European welfare state always relied upon an active citizenship and a major role for non-governmental organisations. In some European countries the non-governmental organisations even play a major rule in providing social services. In addition, voluntary groups form an important part of the system of social services.

It is obvious that non-governmental organisations and voluntary groups are indispensable for modern social services. In the future, they will become more important in this field. This is not only due to the public financial constraints but also to the fact that only an active and participating role of citizens and their organisations can ensure social services of high quality and great effectiveness. The principle of **subsidiarity** as a part of European culture means in this context that self-help and self-organisation by citizens is prior to state intervention: a democratic society requires active and participating citizens, and the term "civil society" expresses the wish that the state should not dominate people's lives as it did in communist European countries some time ago.

In European countries different models of the roles of state, non-governmental organisations and voluntary groups can be found. This diversity is due to cultural traditions and mentalities of people and should be kept in the future. Harmonisation of the structures is not only unachievable but also not effective. There is, however, a need for convergence of structures by striving for common European goals like empowering the citizens / users and making social services more efficient and effective.

During the past years, the commercial organisations became a more important role in the sector of social services. Sometimes it is feared that for-profit organisations would take the pick of the bunch and neglect non-profitable fields of social services. It has also be pointed out that for-profit organisations may only be accessible for rich people. Negative side effects of the inclusion of for-profit organisations can be avoided if the state regulates the market.

The diversity among the providers of social services can be regarded as a great advantage. In order to create more responsibility among providers and to ensure the free choice of the user, the state should arrange a sufficient competition among providers of social services.

b) Users in Social Services

Participation of citizens as users of social services is a high priority in the field of social development. Looking back over the development of social services, citizens asking for assistance with their various personal and social needs were treated more or less as 'objects' of social services. They were traditionally considered as passive 'clients' of the services. They may have actually received the service they really needed, sometimes the agency staff (eg. social workers) provided help which they considered to be good for the `client', or she/he was sent elsewhere because the person in need was not able to conform themselves to the internal rules of the service.

In this all too familiar situation it was overlooked that the client was not an object of social work but someone with a personal dignity as a human being. As such, she/he had a right of access to the service, and also a social right of participation in an active way as an individual in need.

Democratic societies have increasingly acknowledged the new role of the individual as no longer a dependent client but as a personality being competent to express her/his needs, able to discuss the measures and assistance offered to her/him. Furthermore, the person asking for help is to be seen as a competent user or customer of the social service.

Despite this more modern view of the user of social services, the participants at the Frankfurt meeting identified many barriers to the access of and participation in social services. The lack of information for users is a significant barrier, as are the stigmatisation and discrimination of certain groups of users, language and culture, and not least the financial contributions asked of the users of services.

These barriers pointed out may be overcome by new ways of providing information about services, the rights and duties of users, the processes involved in applying for and securing services, and the likely outcomes of services. This information should be distributed in all places regularly, in appropriate languages, and according to the culture and custumes of the potential users. To reduce the fear of entering a service, the first steps to gaining access to services may be sport events or cultural and popular events.

Good experience has been made in France with so-called 'welcome meetings' outside the service units, in railway stations or even pubs. Other examples were TV spots, so-called reality shows with professionals, volunteers and users, and advertisements on television, radio and in newspapers. A telephone services is also used to give information and provide consultation concerning concrete demand of users who are not able or willing to ask directly for personal assistance. The telephone service has proved particularly useful for children and minors with family difficulties.

To reduce and even eliminate linguistic and cultural barriers it is important to have personnel familiar with languages of different ethnic groups and preferably from the same cultural background as the potential users. Staff must be trained to work sensitively and effectively with discriminated and stigmatized, as well as engaging in community relations work in their areas, bringing together the population of the locality and discriminated or stigmatized groups of users.

To avoid users with urgent needs not claiming social services because they cannot pay the financial contribution asked for by the services, there should be minimum standards and mechanisms within the service to cover the costs and to minimize the users' contributions. Sometimes it is possible to raise funds or to obtain personal sponsorships to ensure that the most economically insecure service users are not denied services which they need.

Although participation of users, together with fostering self-help and autonomous action of people is acknowledged as a goal of high priority in European societies, political parties, unions and other important associations too often practice patronage and clientalism. These phenomena cause increasing dependence of users and weakens their capacity for real participation.

To avoid phenomena such as clientism and patronage, the democratisation of services would strengthen the position of social services users. This can be achieved through greater

transparency in the structures and processes of the services. The ambitious goal is to enhance social citizenship through the greater integration of the user into society.

The growth of social problems in the industrialized countries as a consequence of factors such as changing values and living conditions has tended to lead to a dissipation and over specialisation of social services, to the disadvantage of many service users. Information about the different types of services is helpful but the concentration of services in so-called 'one stock shops' is a better way to assure adequate help. Another possibility, as practised in France, is to install a coordinator, fostering cooperation between the specialist services. Another obvious remedy to problems of fragmentation and over specialisation is increased and effective networking between the services.

Community work can play an important role in strengthening the competence of users as partners with management and agency staff, in delivering services, for communication, and acting in other ways within the democratic bodies of the service units. Mediators help users who are not able to express their demands and needs, as well as explaining or translating problems to the service and vice versa. Some experts disagreed with this opinion. They considered that users may be left in their dependent role and not helped to become independent from social services support.

The implications for the role of users of the introduction of markets in social services are as yet uncertain. Participation in commercial for-profit services is not possible if legislation does not impose democratic rights to the users, as seen in regulations for institutional services in the German Home Act. This law prescribes there must be an advisory council of residents in institutions, the council having certain advisory rights. These rights of participation are supervised in a limited way by the public administration.

The new forms of profit oriented services may create an unfortunate system that disadvantages users of these services. Users of commercial services may have far less opportunity to influence the planning, decision-making and delivery of services in a direct democratic way, compared with users with access democratic structured services. These consequences should be taken in mind in the debate on the privatisation and commercialisation of social services.

c) Staff, labour market, training, and volunteers

Social services are marked by an interaction between persons, the employee of the service provider and the user or citizen. Social services do not create products which can be stored; the value and the quality of the service is very much related to the providing person. Even from a financial point of view, usually 60-80 % of the costs of social services are costs of personnel. Therefore, the disposal of sufficient and well-qualified personnel has a strategic role in the development of social services. Moreover, the conditions of work and the organisational framework are key factors for the provision of services.

In addition, non-professionals form an important part of the social service sector. Voluntary work in social services has a great tradition and constitutes in some fields and some countries or regions of Europe the corner pillar of social services. Volunteers have, despite their lack of professionalism, the advantage of dealing with the client as a whole in his/her natural social context. Sometimes they are very helpful for a better understanding of the citizen's needs and can build bridges between the user and highly professionalised social services.

The relationship between professional workers and volunteers in the social sector is an important issue in most of the European countries. An insufficient clarification of the roles of each, the professional and the volunteer, can affect a good co-operation between them. In addition, the increase of voluntary work sometimes creates the fear that working places for professional workers could be reduced.

Employees in the sector of social services form an important part of the labour market. Although there are still high unemployment rates in Europe, a shortage of employees in the labour market is expected post- 2010. In some countries, there is mounting evidence of a shortage of qualified staff in social services. It was recognised that more women participate in the labour force, obtain better qualifications, are paid less, and are available for underpaid jobs in the service sector. Young people tend to look for jobs in other fields than the social sector. Furthermore, some fields of growing importance in social services like those for elderly persons seem to be less attractive for young people than others.

An indication also may be that the recruitment of volunteers for social services is becoming more difficult in some countries. The reasons for this phenomenon are not quite clear. Some argue that the diminished interest is due to more stressful working conditions of younger people than in the past, while others think that social services should make themselves more attractive for young people.

It has been noticed that employees of social services increasingly suffer from frustration and lack of motivation. This could be caused by various factors: insufficient remuneration, lack of training, non-democratic organisation of the service, bad working conditions etc. It is evident that an increasing diversity of users and their growing demands require better trained social workers.

But there is not only a need for better training of staff. Effective management and internal organisation structures which enable the employee to take over more responsibility can help to achieve more motivated and a better performing personnel. New ways of working like multi-disciplinary teams could support more satisfaction among the employees and a better quality of the service. The experiences and know-how of personnel management carried out in other service sectors of the economy should be used for social services. It is quite clear that employees of social services not only need an effective management but also good leadership. Working with people and for people requires social values and social visions.

The modernisation of personnel management includes the guarantee of equal opportunities for women. Furthermore, it is important to include staff from ethnic minorities, since there is a high proportion of people from minorities among the users of social services in may countries.

d) The Gender Issue

Looking at social services from a gender perspective, several aspects are closely linked to women. Financial constraints and structural changes within social services will have a much greater effect on women than on men. It is especially women who need social services. An increasing number of lone-parent-families (mainly single mothers) live on social benefit. Poverty among elderly people in most cases is poverty among women. Women are much more dependent on social security systems because of their unemployment, under-

employment, or being on low paid jobs.

The second gender aspect within the context of social services is the tradition of women bearing the main burden of unpaid social services. Changes of the role of women in our societies has a major consequence for the informal network of social services. As has been stated before as more women join the labour market the informal network of social care is collapsing eg. women as volunteers decline in numbers. Public and private service organisations have to find new ways of meeting the demand for social care which is less and less met by women.

Also, social services can be described as a traditionally female dominated (segregated) labour market. Jobs in the field of social services are highly attractive to women. One reason is that it offers part-time work in order to combine work and family life. But a disadvantage for women is that these jobs are often low paid.

Due to demographic changes mentioned earlier, most European countries face an increasing demand for social services. That is why this sector is expected to provide enhanced job opportunities in the future. In this context it is important to set certain standards of vocational skills and competencies required to ensure a high level of service performance. Training and qualification programmes must ensure equal participation of women.

e) Finance

The reduction of costs is not an end in itself although it may be necessary. The effects cutting public expenditure may even create more indirect economic costs for society as a whole. The final goal is to achieve a system of flexible, citizen-oriented, equally accessible social services of high quality which supports a democratic and socially balanced society.

Public financial constraints have led to various approaches to reducing social services costs financed by public authorities. Lump-sum financing combined with greater freedom to use public money flexibly, plus combining different sources of finance are examples of ways of using public money more effectively. Furthermore, modern management of costs and greater transparency in the use of resources can help to reduce expenses without cutting services. Making costs and prices of social services more transparent and comparable among the different providers will promote competition for better service and lower costs. Self-evidently, costs of services only can be assessed if the quality of the services is taken into account ie."value for money".

Creating personal budgets for users ie. "direct payments" can be regarded as a means of making better use of financial resources by giving more responsibility to the user. It gives the user more freedom of choice and may be a more effective way of meeting their needs, but it may also help to reduce costs of administration and control. The first practical experiments with "personal budgets", eg. for handicapped people, indicate that this method should be used more often.

More generally, reduction of costs can be achieved by preventing the emergence of need for social services. Independent life is the most appreciated goal among people and can also avoid unnecessary costs for social services. The state and insurance associations bearing the costs of services should develop more incentives to prevent the need for help. Even more, helping the users to achieve an independent life through social services

should be supported by incentives / sanctions for service providers. The final aim is not to optimise and to enlarge a system of social services but to keep people independent and self-sufficient in their lives.

f) Quality Issues in Social Services

The subject of quality has become prominent in European social services only quite recently. As a generalisation, a traditional view in social work and their employing agencies was that 'we know best' and the client was not in a position to know or pass an opinion about the quality of a service. This more recent concern for quality in social work and social services is part of a more fundamental movement to assert the rights of customers and service users in many fields, and to question the old view that professionals and their agencies will naturally do the right thing for us. Perhaps the worst example of the almost complete absence of any customer or user orientation was in the workings of most services in former communist countries.

As participants at the Frankfurt meeting agreed, the use of terms and methods such as 'quality management', 'quality control' and 'quality assurance' is another example of social services being dependent on developments in industry and commerce. It was acknowledged that social services are feeling their way with the introduction of quality measures and methods, and need to be wary of adopting inappropriate methods from other sectors.

Concerning quality, the social services user is in a different and more difficult position from the purchaser of goods in the high street. The latter has her or his own view of quality and makes a purchase accordingly. If quality proves to be unacceptable she/he may return the good and complain or purchase a similar item from an alternative shop next time. This is the supermarket model. The sophisticated customer may also consult independent evaluations of the quality of goods before making a purchase.

The position of the social services user is different. She/he frequently is not paying directly for the service, is uncertain about acceptable standards of quality, and may have very little if any choice between alternative suppliers of a service. Therefore, the social services user tends to be very dependent on third parties to define and ensure quality standards in services. In our discussions the following developments and issues were referred to:

1. Quality was defined as 'fitness for purpose'. It is not necessary to have a Rolex watch to know the time, a Timex watch serves the same purpose. Nor is it necessary to include caviar in a meals-on-wheels lunch.

2. Quality may be defined in relation to both process and output. The former is concerned with procedures and methods in a production process, the latter with the finished product. Social services are familiar with the ISO 9000, a set of international generic standards for quality. Under the ISO 9000 approach an organisation applies for registration for its quality processes and systems. To varying degrees social services agencies in Europe are establishing systems for ensuring quality eg. closer specification of standards, tighter requirements on staffing levels and qualifications of personnel.

3. A problem with ISO 9000 and systems being established in public services is that they become excessively bureaucratic. Staff have to complete endless forms with little awareness of the real purpose of doing so. The danger is that establishing quality procedures becomes a defensive activity, it is required and is done to avoid a possible penalty. This is becoming a real problem in a range of public services, including social

services.

4. Of course the social services user should be the best judge of quality output. Therefore, more attention is now given to surveys of user satisfaction. What matters then is what actions are taken following the results. As indicated above, unlike the supermarket shopper the social services user is rarely able to assess quality by comparing like services provided by different suppliers. This is a serious disadvantage. So she/he remains rather dependent on the professionals defining and assuring quality for her/him.

5. Professionals and those responsible for social services use two main ways to establish and check on service quality. Professionals traditionally do this through peer reviews by colleagues. Professional associations establish standards and ethics designed to ensure acceptable quality for users of their services. Individuals working at an unacceptable level of service quality standard may be disciplined. However, it was acknowledged at Frankfurt that welfare professions have weaker peer review systems than is the case, for example, in medicine.

6. Systems of inspection have traditionally been used in most public services to check on service standards. In social services there may be a central government inspection system, staffed by personnel who previously worked in social services agencies. In the UK the inspectors have considerable powers to require improvements in all aspects of local authorities' service standards. Inspection is seen as particularly important in the emerging systems of mixed economies of social services where services are increasing contracted out to external suppliers. Inspection as a tool to assure proper quality is only as good as the resources put into it and its powers to require improvements when quality is unacceptable.

Participants were informed that the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions will soon start on a multi-country study of quality in social welfare, as it applies both to service users and to social services staff.

Finally on the subject of quality, there is the question of cost implications. Even if we accept the earlier view that you do not need to include caviar with meals-on-wheels, there is often an increased cost consequence to taking quality seriously in social services. This may range from the substantial cost of ensuring that staff are properly trained to provide service of sufficient standard, to the cost of physical adaptations to a disabled person's home to enable him/her to continue to live there.

Question - to what extent can improvements in social service standards and quality be afforded during a prolonged period of heavy constraints on social service expenditure?

g) Equal Access to Services

Migration has been identified as a significant challenge affecting social services in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Suppliers of social services rarely reflect the growing number of ethnic groups in their staff recruitment, nor are service providers sufficiently prepared to answer the specific needs of people from different ethnic origins.

An essential element of the European political culture is the emphasis on universal access to social rights. In a legal and democratic state equal access to social services is mainly supported by defined social rights. Apart from the legal question, a number of factors create

inadequate coverage or lack of access to social services. Some of these factors are:

1. financial barriers (eg. fees or charges which discourage people from applying for services)

2. lack of information about what is available and the criteria of eligibility

3. physical barriers (eg. concerning people with disabilities, remoteness or isolation of services, inadequate transport facilities)

4. social barriers (eg. language problems, discrimination, stigmatisation)

5. bureaucratic barriers (eg. complexity of administration)

6. selective treatment or 'creaming'

7. insufficient development of civil society organisations such as advocates or 'watchdogs'

8. endogenous factors (eg. illiteracy, prejudice, fear of dealing with authority)

9. institutional barriers (eg. lack of knowledge, skills and competencies; inadequate conditions such as opening hours)

10. differences in income which influence the quality of service which is or can be chosen.

h) Organisation, management and efficiency of Social Services

Organisations providing social services are very different as to size, scope, legal status etc. The diversity derives from national culture, tradition and from differences in the types of service. The demands on social services are likewise different. Institutional and non-institutional care, services for small or for large target groups, the degree of dependence of public financing, and the nature of the social problem to be tackled are examples of different requirements for the organisation and management of services.

There are, however, common challenges for social services in a rapidly changing social and economical environment. As the labour market for social services cannot be separated from the general labour market, social services are in competition with other parts of society in this regard. To recruit and to keep qualified and suitable personnel, working conditions, remuneration, and career opportunities must all be competitive within the general labour market. In addition, the increasing expectations of users and the pressure caused by public financial constraints create much higher demands on the organisation and management of social services.

The internal structure and culture of service organisations should allow a great flexibility, a high standard of service culture, high performance and efficiency. Democratic and flexible structures, including considerable responsibility for employees, will be better able to meet the new demands than traditional hierarchical institutions. This is true for commercial and non-profit organisations as well as for public institutions.

Furthermore, new demands will arise from modern information technologies. They will change the way of working inside the service organisation and affect the relationship between service provider and user as well. New information technology can both replace

employees and create new job opportunities. Services can be provided faster and more efficiently by accelerating and improving communication. This can be achieved through users having access to information through the internet, and services can obtain more data about the needs and wishes of users by using new technologies. If, for example, home carers provide data about their work and the needs of clients each day to a service centre, the quality of services can be adapted to the users more rapidly and exactly. There is no doubt that the use of modern technologies can help services to be more flexible and orientated to the needs of users.

There is still a gap between the requirements of transparency of costs and the availability of data about social services. Adequate bookkeeping systems and use of computers to establish an effective controlling process is not self-evident for social services. It is vital for the efficient management of social services to use modern means of cost-controlling and assessing the real outcome of services. Furthermore, public institutions (public authorities, social insurance organisations) financing social services should establish a framework of competition among service providers which allows them to make the outcome and the resources used for a service both transparent and comparable. Although the definition of indicators of performance may be more difficult for social services than for private industry products, a clear concept and measurement of outcome of social services is indispensable.

Regarding efficiency and effectiveness of social services, there is no general rule as to the size and the legal status of service providers. Large organisations may have more resources to enable them to use effective management tools and new technologies, but they are frequently less flexible and less prepared for a rapid change of structures than are small organisations. Public services providers are often seen as less flexible and changeable than private non-profit or for profit organisations. They can, however, quickly catch up if they have to compete with other providers, private or public.

In a pluralistic and manifold society marked by an overwhelming flood of information, it is necessary for service providers to make full use of modern public relationship and marketing methods, regardless of whether the service organisations are public or private. Public social service organisations have to present themselves and advertise in relation to users but also to financial institutions and the general public. The information society requires a highly active approach with regard to the media and the general public.

5 CONCLUSIONS

i) New Approach to Social Services

The traditional perception of social services refers to a model of society where one part of society, in particular the economic sector, produces the wealth whereas the other parts distribute and consume it. Social services seem to be non-productive in an economic sense - they obtain their legitimacy from ethical or moral principles of a human society. The needy part of population relies upon the productive or well-off part of the society. If the economy does not flourish and public finances are limited, social services seem to become a luxury which cost society resources without contributing to economic wealth. This model expresses a type of separation of social services from the rest of society - with their own rules, their unique structure and own mentality.

In fact, western industrialised societies have changed considerably over the past decades.

The risk to become dependent on social services is not restricted to a specific social group like - for instance - the working class. Despite a tremendous increase of standards of living social disparities in society did not disappear but even increase. There has been a major change of social structures: smaller families, a greater diversity of forms of living together (eg. single parent families, households of singles), an increasing urbanisation and mobility of people, a greater life expectancy etc. Social services are no longer exclusive for poor people or a few extreme life situations but a "normal" means to manage daily life. It is a long time ago that the family or - in a few cases - the church or a charity organisation covered the social needs of people. In modern society, social services are characterised by:

- self-confident users or customers of services rather than recipients of alms high professional and specialised social workers/staff
- legally guaranteed social rights of the needy
- well-organised service providers operating according to modern standards of management
- efficient and effective methods of providing services with high quality standards
- flexible, plural, user-oriented services marked by a great variety

In European countries, the social service sector has become of equal rank with other parts of society. It is much interrelated with other sectors and likewise affected by rationalisation, professionalism, use of modern technologies, developed division of work etc. Furthermore, social services are becoming more important for the development of society as whole since they spend a major part of public expenditure and employ a great number of employees.

The development from the traditional model towards a modern model of social services is underway. In some European countries it is far more advanced than in others, in particular the southern member states. Nevertheless, the new role of social services will require a change of the relations between the user, the service providers as well as the state. Although it is difficult to define the new roles it is clear that traditional relations between the clients, public authorities and service providers will change.

ii) Evaluating Outcomes of Social Services

Participants at the meeting referred to the increasing emphasis on evaluation of outcomes of social services in their countries. Naturally, this is more evident in some countries than others. How is this to be explained and is it a positive development?

Much social work intervention and social services provision can be understood as a process of inputs - outputs - outcomes. A home help regularly goes to an elderly housebound person to clean, shop and cook. Those activities are service inputs. The house is therefore kept clean, food is bought and meals cooked - all outputs. So far the service process is relatively easy to record and quantify. The results of the service inputs and outputs may be that the user remains healthy because of regular and nutritious meals, and her psychological health is maintained at a good level because of the combined effects of the home help service. These are important but quite difficult to measure outcomes of the service.

Satisfactory evaluations and studies of outputs in social services can be difficult to conduct for methodological reasons. For example, it is not always possible to show a clear causal link

between service inputs and outputs, and results or outcomes for the user. Nevertheless, such studies are important and increasingly required for at least two strong reasons.

First, because of a European wide movement to become more user orientated in social services we require a greater concern for the effectiveness of our services. We have to know much more about what services produce which outcomes for whom, how, and what implications results of such studies have for the development of services and practice. This is clear. Secondly, outcome studies are needed to help ensure that the best use is made of scarce resources. There is little point in continuing to provide services in a traditional - and rather expensive - way if they are shown to have very poor outcomes for the majority of users of a service. An example mentioned earlier in this report is how too many elderly people may be placed in residential care, when better and less costly outcomes can be achieved through a redesigned, intensive community care service.

Finally, regular dissemination of the results of outcomes studies is needed. This is partially achieved through journals and meetings such as the one at Frankfurt but results of important studies in any one European country, with implications for service improvements elsewhere, are frequently unknown to social services personnel in other countries. A European digest of the results of important studies would be an invaluable contribution to overcoming the dissemination problem.

iii) Social Services Priorities

Four priorities have been selected from the discussions in Frankfurt. They are selected because of their universality, not only within Europe but also internationally.

1. **Effective responses to public expenditure constraints**

   The budgetary problems facing all governments have been referred to, together with their implications for social services and the types of responses seen across Europe. New approaches to acquiring adequate finance for social services are needed, in addition to measures mentioned elsewhere in this report. Possibilities vary between countries but include increased income from national insurance payments (eg. the German longterm care insurance scheme), taxation (difficult), and commercial sources. Countries are already studying promising approaches in other parts of the world as part of this 're-think on welfare', including social services.

2. **Strengthening the position of service users**

   There was much discussion and concern on this issue at the Frankfurt meeting, with examples of specific improvements. Given the structural weakness in the system of the typical social service user, the various interest groups need to strengthen their commitment to furthering the interests of the user in very tangible ways. Just one example has been the introduction - particularly in Germany and Austria - of direct payments to users to enable them to purchase social services, thereby exercising greater control over what is provided for them.

3. **Changing from a paternalistic to a service culture**

   This priority links closely with the previous one. The worst examples of non-service, paternalistic service cultures were found in the former communist countries of Europe. The best commercial organisations accept that the customer is King or Queen, a

recognition that informs their entire operation. Social services agencies and their staff are slowly moving in this latter direction. There are incentives for employees in many commercial enterprises to demonstrate a strong service orientation in their work. Social services similarly need incentive systems to help ensure the adoption of service cultures.

4. **Adopting an holistic approach**

Social workers - and doctors - have long been encouraged to take a holistic approach to assessing and meeting the needs of their clients/patients, and criticised when they have failed to do so. Social services organisations likewise need to adopt this holistic approach but this is not entirely within their control. For example, health and social services needs and consequent services are frequently indivisible but there are bureaucratic resistances to integrating separate services in the interests of the citizen.

Strong incentives are now needed to effect change towards more holistic services to confront social problems. Currently the European Union is showing the way with its programme to address problems of social exclusion and marginalisation. Projects are funded if they are based on a multi-agency, integrated approach instead of a fragmented, single agency strategy. The attraction of substantial funds provides a very strong incentive for separate services - including social services - to adopt a more holistic approach to social problems.

APPENDIX III

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

European Expert Meeting on "Social Services for All"

Frankfurt/Main : 14-16 October 1998

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United Nations E/CN.5/1999/12

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 1999

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Thirty-seventh session
9–19 February 1999
Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups

Letter dated 25 January 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Economic and Social Council, by its resolution 1997/55, welcomed the support of the Government of Portugal for the holding of the third session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System, which was convened by the United Nations in partnership with the Portuguese National Youth Council at Braga, Portugal, from 2 to 7 August 1998. I should therefore be grateful if you would have the report of the third session of the Forum (see annex)** circulated as a document of the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-seventh session under the item concerned with the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

I would like to express the deep appreciation of the Government of Portugal for the excellent cooperation between the United Nations system and the Portuguese National Youth Council in convening and organizing the third session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System, and to you for supporting this initiative.

(Signed) José Tadeu **Soares**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* E/CN.5/1999/1.

** The Braga Youth Action Plan is available in all official languages as annex III to document A/53/378; the complete report of the Forum will be circulated in all official languages as a document of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

99-02103 (E) 280199

Braga Youth Action Plan

and Working Group Reports

World Youth Forum
of the
United Nations System

Third Session, 2-7 August 1998
Braga, Portugal

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* The present document contains the *Braga Youth Action Plan*, as adopted by the third session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System on Friday 7 August 1998. It was presented to the United Nations Secretary-General as well as to the first World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth. In addition, this document includes the reports from each of the Forum's ten working groups.

BRAGA YOUTH ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

We, representatives of youth and youth-serving organisations, the United Nations system and other inter-governmental organisations have met from 2 to 7 August 1998 in Braga, Portugal at the third World Youth Forum of the United Nations System.

We have gathered here to promote Youth Participation for Human Development, convinced that the participation of youth is a prerequisite for the development of humankind as a whole.

On the threshold of a new millennium, young people are full of hope and commitment. We are convinced that in partnership between youth and youth-serving organisations, national governments, the United Nations system and other inter-governmental organisations, we can shape our world for the creation of a better future for all.

Young people face the challenges of injustice and exclusion resulting mainly from the enormous inequities in income, wealth and power dominating today's world. Because trade and investment agreements and relations remain unfair there is a growing gap between the rich and the poor.

Young people are burdened by the financial and debt crisis, and as a result of Structural Adjustment Programs they experience the consequences of on-going cuts in government expenditure in human services. There is a decline of educational systems, young peoples' access to health services is restricted and youth unemployment is growing.

Young people suffer from xenophobia and racism, homophobia, exclusion from democratic participation. Young people lack access to information despite new possibilities to communicate across borders that should promote tolerance in multiethnic societies, increased respect for Human Rights and greater participation.
Real and sustainable solutions to these problems can only be found at the global level through the development of new partnerships between all the parties involved. Such solutions include the promotion of social spending through the cancellation of external debt of the highly indebted poor countries; trade agreements respecting the right to work and decent working conditions; fulfilment of the agreed 0.7% target of GNP for Official Development Assistance; the full payment of United Nations dues in time without conditions; and further reform of the United Nations system.

Young people can and should be a part of the solution to the problems in the world. Everywhere, young people and youth organisations show that they are not obstacles, but invaluable resources for development.

Youth are building democratic leadership, civil society and social capital for the 21st century.

With the *Braga Youth Action Plan*, we want to empower young people to participate in human development. Youth Participation for Human Development requires that:
- the international community, the private sector and especially governments provide young people with adequate financial resources in order to realize their entire potential in becoming full and active partners in the development process;
- young people are recognized not only as future leaders, but as actors of society today, with a direct stake in the development process;
- young women and men should be enabled to participate on equal terms: sexism is an obstacle that must be overcome and the empowerment of women a prerequisite for development;
- ALL young people should be enabled to participate as both creators and beneficiaries of development: unemployment, illiteracy, the discrimination against indigenous young people, against young people with disabilities or discrimination based on religious beliefs, and other forms of social exclusion are threats to development;
- justice between present and future generations is recognized as a fundamental base for sustainable development: young people should participate in the decisions taken today about the resources of tomorrow;
- youth should participate in political decision making on all levels, and young people must be enabled to organise themselves in youth NGOs, students unions, trade unions, political parties, and in the creation of mass media, in order to fully participate in political, economic, social and cultural life; and
- youth issues are not treated in isolation, but mainstreamed into all policy making. The third World Youth Forum is an example of how a cross-sectoral approach can be used successfully.

The *Braga Youth Action Plan* is a joint commitment to Youth Participation for Human Development made by youth NGOs, the United Nations system and other inter-governmental organisations in partnership.

As participants at the third World Youth Forum of the United Nations System, we pledge our personal and unwavering commitment towards Youth Participation for Human Development.

We now call upon all youth, governments of the world and the international community to work together with us to carry out these commitments and make our vision of Youth Participation for Human Development a reality.

The World Youth Forum Recommends:

YOUTH POLICIES

Integrated Cross-Sectoral Youth Policies

1. the formulation in all states of youth policies, by the year 2005, which are cross sectoral, comprehensive and formulated with long-term vision coupled with Action Plans taking into consideration the guidelines set forth in the *World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*. Youth policies should be accorded a legal status and backed

by legislative structures and sufficient resources. We encourage all governments to establish and/or strengthen youth focal point institutions within the governmental structure. Youth policies should be formulated via a thorough consultation process between the government and the national youth NGO platforms as well as other stakeholders as equal partners in that process.

2. the effective implementation of cross-sectoral youth policies in accordance with the Action Plans and their time-frames which are formulated together with the youth policies. Action Plans should be utilized as a guideline for monitoring and evaluating the status of the implementation of youth policies by all stakeholders, especially by the youth NGO platforms.

3. that the United Nations, in collaboration with other inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, identify the best practices on youth policy formulation and implementation and encourage the adaptation of the principles and experiences among the member states of the United Nations. Greater use could be made of the Youth Theme Group mechanism within the United Nations Resident Co-ordinators System to increase the co-ordination of United Nations entities in the field of youth for the promotion of national youth policies. The Youth Theme Group should give priority to collaboration between youth NGOs and United Nations entities.

Youth NGO Co-operation at the National Level:

4. the formation and/or strengthening of national youth NGO platforms, which represent the widest range of democratic youth organisations of each state to be established with the initiatives of the youth organisations themselves. The platforms should respect each member organisation s independence and operate based on the principles of solidarity and democracy. The governments should recognize the national youth NGO platforms legally and as partner in policy making, provide them with adequate financial support and guarantee the free development of NGOs.

5. the formulation of informal and formal consultative mechanisms between national youth NGO platforms and governments, which operate based on the principles of mutual respect and equal partnership, so that the concerns of youth are fully reflected in the national policy making.

6. the United Nations system, international organisations, including international and national youth NGO platforms, should strengthen the capacity of youth NGOs at the national, regional and international levels through enhanced co-operation at all levels.

Youth, Poverty Eradication and Development:

7. based on the Braga Initiative on Debt Crisis, Governments; the international community, including the IMF, the World Bank and other United Nations agencies, to work in partnership with youth NGOs to organise regional seminars before the year 2000 to assess the impact of the debt crisis on young men and women in countries with such debts. The results of their findings should be used to make informed policy in the

international community, particularly in the areas of structural adjustment programs, capacity building, awareness raising, and advocacy with the aim of eradicating poverty. These regional seminars also should lead to a joint international conference of Youth NGOs and the United Nations system, including the World Bank and the IMF, to be held before the year 2001.

8. We recommend that youth organisations, in co-operation with governments, United Nations agencies and organisations, IGOs, and international financial institutions, establish where they do not exist, and strengthen existing national, sub-regional, and regional youth networks and agencies. Such agencies, autonomous in planning, decision making, and implementation, should carry out effective poverty eradication, participate in development programs, and act as a monitoring body to evaluate progress. They should give due consideration to the social and cultural background of target groups, and appropriate training and follow-up should involve local community members.

9. While emphasizing the fact that Governments and the international community have the primary responsibility for poverty eradication, the World Youth Forum affirms the indispensable contributions made by young people in poverty eradication and development. We recommend that all major actors concerned with poverty and youth promote, support, develop, and fund youth volunteerism. Furthermore, high-profile should be given to youth-led volunteerism during the International Year of Volunteers in 2001.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Participation of ALL Young People:

10. it be recognized that young people with disabilities have greater difficulties participating in society due to lack of equal opportunities. To improve their independent access to the physical environment, information, devices of assistance, equipment, awareness campaigns and fundraising are necessary. This should be promoted and enhanced at all levels through co-operation among NGO s concerned with disability, as well as United Nations agencies, governments and IGO s.

11. Governments, NGOs, IGOs and the United Nations system promote inter-cultural understanding among different cultures through workshops, seminars, exchange programs and youth camps, with an adequate evaluation process to ensure that all cultures, and specifically Indigenous young people, are fully recognized, respected and valued in society. We also propose that the United Nations sponsor a World Indigenous Youth Conference and for any future United Nations sponsored youth activities, processes be established to ensure specific Indigenous participants are included as delegates in their own right.

12. that NGOs take the initiative, in co-operation with United Nations specialized agencies, programs and funds as well as national youth platforms, to establish conferences that enable an exchange of experiences and information about working with young people living in extreme poverty and those requiring protection from violence, in particular young women. Priority should be given to reaching young people living in extreme poverty and working in partnership with them in the design and implementation of youth policies and

concrete projects in the areas of health, education, training and employment. We also propose the creation of national monitoring centres to submit an annual report to the United Nations system on young people victimized by violence. The results of the conferences on young people excluded by extreme poverty and the report on young people victimized by violence should be widely disseminated by all forms of media and used as a reference in evaluating the implementation or national youth policies.

Youth Organisations and the United Nations System:

13. the United Nations support broad involvement of youth NGOs in the decision making process in a democratic manner throughout the United Nations system. We ask for greater consultation and the full and effective participation of youth NGOs in United Nations system conferences, commissions, specialized agencies, programs and funds which should meet in different regions to ensure equitable geographic representation. We encourage Member States to include representatives of youth NGOs in national delegations to the General Assembly, and other United Nations system conferences and commissions. This must allow for a wide, inclusive and gender balanced representation of all youth, including groups such as indigenous people, the youth with disabilities, immigrants, refugees and all minorities.

14. The recognition of the responsibility of youth to take it upon themselves to help implement the *Braga Youth Action Plan* and other United Nations initiatives - thus we offer to the United Nations system the services of youth at the national, regional and international levels. In order for this to be successful, there must be increased co-ordination of such implementation at the national and regional levels; information should be made easily accessible to all young people (which may be facilitated by United Nations system offices); the question of national funding to broaden the effectiveness of youth NGOs with the aim of using such funds to set up eventual self reliant organisations should be addressed; and non-associated youth must be involved in order to ensure effective implementation of all programs.

15. That youth issues should be given higher priority in United Nations system. We recommend the strengthening of the United Nations Youth Unit and its counterparts in other funds, programs and specialized agencies and the provision to them of greater resources and more staff notably young people. We recommend the expansion of their mandate to include the dissemination of information and the co-ordination of policies and programs between youth NGOs and the various specialized agencies, funds and programs. There should be national liaison offices for young people at the United Nations local offices, and a quota for youth organisations in the national United Nations programs. We must also ensure the continuation of the World Youth Forum process, including the convening of regional youth forums/consultations both in the preparation and follow-up of the Forum and the strengthening of its links with future high-level, inter-governmental conferences on youth (such as the Ministers Conference on Youth), through joint preparation, meetings and follow-up. Member States should contribute generously to the United Nations Youth Fund, which should give priority to for South - South project.

Education for the 21st Century:

16. that access to all levels of education should not be on the basis of economic status. We call on governments to increase resource allocation to education, and on UNESCO, with the technical and financial support of governments, to establish a World Education Fund to provide grants to ensure equal access to all educational levels.

17. that it be recognized as a right the empowerment of young people via full and active participation and representation in all types of education, and calls upon governments to do the same. We call on governments to recognize and promote the importance of non-formal education, it being integral to the full development of individuals and societies and as therefore being complementary to formal education. We recommend the establishment of Departments of Non-formal Education within Ministries of Education, which would work in partnership with NGOs responsible for non-formal education policies, through a democratic NGO forum.

18. while recognizing that education should be relevant to employment opportunities, we call on the governments to analyze and review their formal education policies to incorporate the teaching of languages, including local and indigenous languages, and global citizenship education, emphasizing universal concepts such as peace, Human Rights, intercultural and inter-religious understanding, environmental protection, sustainable development, and gender equality. The World Youth Forum calls for the development of regional and international teaching materials through United Nations agencies, the adequate training of all educators and the establishment of national co-ordination units.

Youth Employment for Social Development:

19. the recognition that the problem of youth unemployment is serious and complex which requires action both the macro and microeconomic levels by governments, the social partners, NGOs, and the United Nations system. There is a need to promote, improve, and extend the design and implementation of policies and programs to promote employment among young people. We recommend that the United Nations system, in close collaboration with youth NGOs, undertake a comparative evaluation of the situation of youth employment programs in different countries from different regions. This evaluation should emphasize programs for disadvantaged youth, such as, but not exclusively, women, youth with disabilities, the long term unemployed, indigenous peoples and migrants. The evaluation should look at issues such as the sustainability of jobs created once programs are completed, the quality of jobs created and the contribution of the project to social development.

20. the recognition that there is a lack of institutional capacity of NGOs in the employment area and communication between NGOs and the United Nations system. NGOs often face difficulties in raising funds to finance projects and lack knowledge about existing projects and programs to promote youth employment. To overcome this, we propose a new system of information exchange between youth NGOs and the United Nations system and a framework of collaboration to provide technical and financial support to NGOs. The first step is for all NGOs to gain access to relevant communication facilities (with the assistance of the United Nations system). The second step would be to create a

web site and mail-out directory with and for NGOs as another means of communication. The Webster should contain, among other things, information regarding the NGOs and International Organisations themselves, printed material in electronic format produced by the United Nations system, project updates and experiences and ideas on how to obtain financial and technical support for activities related to youth employment.

21. that there is a need to empower, mobilize and inform young people about fundamental rights at work. In order to promote social development these rights must be respected by all. Youth NGOs should participate in the ILO s efforts to publicize its Conventions, Recommendations and Resolutions, especially the "Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work" adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 1998. We further recommend that an information dissemination campaign be undertaken by NGOs with the financial support of the United Nations system to educate young people about their rights under the ILO s instruments. The campaign should take the form of conferences, information materials and training, and will emphasize grassroots participation.

Youth, Health and Development:

22. the formulation/review and implementation of an integrated national youth health policy addressing all major health issues including : sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, infectious diseases, substance abuse, nutrition and hygiene, harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, mental health, occupational and environmental health. This requires the active participation of youth, youth related organisations, government bodies, NGOs, international organisations and agencies of the United Nations system.

23. the provision of youth-friendly health services, counseling and especially reproductive health services that are comprehensive, accessible and participatory, to ensure the holistic well-being of all young people.

24. the international community implement reliable research, monitoring and assessment concerning the health needs of young people with the full participation of youth and widespread and interactive exchange of information addressing those needs. The government bodies, NGOs, international organisations, and agencies of the United Nations system, in collaboration with youth organisations should co-ordinate the efficient peer-education training of young people in all spheres of life on life skills, and the training of parents, teachers, religious and traditional leaders and caregivers on support skills. Information centres should be created that would be run by youth and for youth.

YOUTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Role of Youth in the Promotion of Human Rights:

25. that Human Rights education be recognized as a basic human right. This right includes access to, and exchange of, information on universally accepted civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, and their violations. It aims at advocating the

implementation of basic Human Rights. ALL young people must become involved in Human Rights education as key recipients and providers.

26. Institutions, including governments, the United Nations system, intergovernmental organisations and educational authorities, responsible for Human Rights education at the community, national, regional and international level, must ensure an enabling environment for youth involvement in Human Rights education. This includes the opportunity for active participation of youth organisations in the decision making process, in the implementation, as well as in existing monitoring and reporting procedures linked to Human Rights education.

27. that youth organisations commit themselves to develop and implement effective strategies on Human Rights education. We recommend a Human Rights focal point to be designated in each youth organisation. Partnership between the United Nations system and such focal points should be established within the framework of the United Nations Decade on Human Rights Education (1995-2004). Human Rights education methodologies shall take into account the need for cultural sensitivity and should include lobbying, networking, exchange of best practices, capacity-building and preparation of material in local languages.

Youth Rights Charter and a Special Rapporteur on Youth Rights:

28. the United Nations Youth Unit produce and assist youth NGOs disseminate at international, regional, national and local levels a *compendium on existing youth rights* which consists of the compilation of the existing rights regarding young people already included in resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and in United Nations Human Rights instruments, including United Nations international conferences such as those in Cairo, Copenhagen, Vienna and Beijing. The compendium should be made into a *youth friendly* publication available and accessible to all youth around the world.

29. a *United Nations Special Rapporteur on Youth Rights* should be appointed by United Nations Secretary General before the end of 1999, based on nominations through regional consultations of NGOs to be made by August 1999. He or she should be mandated for three years (renewal possible only for two terms). He or she should be a young independent expert (no older than 35 years of age at the time of appointment and renewal), experienced with Human Rights issues, recently and directly involved with youth organisations. Effort must ensure the elimination of discrimination with every appointment to ensure fair and equal opportunity in the position over time. He or she must submit an annual report to the United Nations General Assembly and other relevant bodies, including recommendations for better implementation of youth rights. He or she should be actively supported by all United Nations structures.

30. we urge the Secretary General of the United Nations to take the initiative, with the help of specialized agencies, relevant regional organisations and youth NGOs, for the organisation of an *ad hoc* event on Youth Rights, in order to bring together representatives of states and all interested national, regional and international youth NGOs. This World event (either a special session of United Nations General Assembly or a United Nations World Conference on Youth Rights) should be prepared at the national and regional levels

through campaigning to promote the largest possible involvement of young people. The *ad hoc* event on Youth Rights should address the questions of how to improve the Human Rights situation of youth under sanctions, embargoes and occupation.

WORKING GROUP REPORTS

Each of the ten working groups at the World Youth Forum presented three key recommendations for the Braga Youth Action Plan. In addition, each working group prepared a report with additional recommendations as well as follow-up strategies for how to implement the proposals made. The working group reports are diverse in character. In order to present a proper reflection of the discussions in each working group the reports have only been edited for clarity. References to numbered recommendations indicate sections of the Braga Youth Action Plan (above).

YOUTH POLICIES

1. INTEGRATED CROSS-SECTORAL YOUTH POLICIES
2. YOUTH NGO COOPERATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

We, young people of the working group gathered in Braga representing the different youth organisations of the world, worked together with a vision of mutual understanding and cooperation with the basic principles of partnership and solidarity, believing in the important role of young people in Human Development. Coming from different regions, countries, realities and speaking different languages, we felt united in our striving for a better present and future of all. Considering integrated cross-sectoral youth policies and NGO cooperation at the national level there should be three mechanisms:

1. National youth NGO platforms
2. Governmental youth focal point institutions
3. Consultative mechanisms between the national youth NGO platform and the Government

The coexistence of these three mechanisms is a tool for more effective youth policy making and its implementation for the benefit of all young people and future generations. Therefore they should reflect the local reality of each country, strengthening the existing mechanisms or creating new ones in accordance with the proposed principles.

We strongly recommend points 1-6 from the *Braga Youth Action Plan* and would like to clarify some concepts that are included in those recommendations:

Youth focal point institutions:
This includes youth ministries, youth departments, administrations and other governmental bodies focussing on youth.
Best practices:
This includes methodology, methods, goals, resources, structures, etc Furthermore they should not only be reflected but also internalised in each respective system by the United Nations.
Widest range of democratic youth organisations:
This includes minorities, ethnic young people, indigenous young people, people with disabilities, etc

We strongly recommend that youth organisations should work with and for young people,

and young people should be visible and present in the bodies, events and processes that concerns us. These young people should be representatives of their peers.

Implementation

1. Create public funds at all levels with the purpose of financing different youth initiatives and developing the youth non-governmental platforms.
2. The discussion of the fourth World Youth Forum should be organised and based on the reports that reflect the progress of the *Braga Youth Action Plan* and the *World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*. These reports should be written by the United Nations system, NGOs and other structures involved in these processes.
3. Develop leadership programs for nurturing democratic leadership in each region and sub-region. These programs should be linked with the different sectors concerned with youth.
4. Create information exchange at all levels through international consultations that can promote capacity building of those youth NGOs which come from the countries where such national youth NGOs platform do not exist.
5. Create or strengthen pools of trainers in each region backed up by training and information centres of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and/or non-governmental organisations. These trainers can provide training for youth leaders in the centres and in the different countries of the regions. The youth leaders can act as multipliers and set up their own pools of trainers of their respective countries.
6. The NGOs should organise and strengthen networks at the national, regional and international levels and work in the spirit of the *Braga Youth Action Plan*.

3. YOUTH, POVERTY ERADICATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The working group on Youth, Poverty Eradication and Development met from 2-7 August, 1998 at the World Youth Forum in Braga - Portugal. The main objective of the group was to collectively work towards recommendations, which were then included in the *Braga Youth Action Plan* and thereafter submitted at the Conference of Ministers for Youth in Lisbon - Portugal. Along with the recommendations a plan of action and follow up mechanisms were developed. The group agreed that the core of the three proposals is the follow up, which actually serves as an instrument whereby the recommendations can be effectively measured by all concerned. The following will depict the working group's strategy over the course of the Forum. Outcomes of the working group were conducted in a democratic fashion, taking into account gender, race, regional and organisational backgrounds.

At the onset of the meeting, the group agreed that a common framework and working definition should be discussed. Below are the many points which group members associated with youth and poverty. These points were the basis of the work and helped members to remain focused while working towards the three recommendations and the follow up procedures.

The following points were identified as impacting factors to youth and poverty. They include:

- The debt crises in Africa
- Imposed, inappropriate interventions and programs on youth
- Employment issues (unemployment, underemployment and lack of job training) lack of youth participation in the decision making process
- Lack of community based development
- Insufficient opportunities for youth partnerships
- Education (lack of resources, equal gender opportunities, access)
- Hunger (contaminated food and drinking water)
- Health (no access, lack of information on medical services and treatment)
- Shelter (inadequate housing)
- Relative and absolute poverty
- Structural adjustment programs

These points opened the door to the different opportunities that exist for youth and the manner in which they could be addressed. Through much deliberation the group proposed the following opportunities as venues for positive action:

- Job training/Employment opportunities;
- Developed countries should assist in the eradication of developing countries debt;
- Countries and communities should be encouraged to develop their own programs;
- No imposition and out of context interventions;
- Publicise the current positive work of youth on all levels, this could increase partnerships;
- Encourage volunteer efforts among youth, this will assist in the work of empowerment;
- Micro Credit opportunities;
- Education Enhancement Training;
- Increase and improve outreach efforts;
- Create and distribute literature on drug use; and
- Link youth from developing countries with youth from developed countries.

The above-mentioned opportunities created a positive environment for the group to begin thinking of existing programs in the area of Youth, Poverty Eradication and Development that have proven successful over periods of time. The knowledge of the existence and operation of these programs gave insight and guidance, which aided us in the construction of three meaningful recommendations. After much discussions the working group agreed on the following areas that were of pressing importance to the work on Youth, Poverty Eradication and Development.

Youth Empowerment and Volunteerism – which we strongly believe would address the human needs such as food, shelter, clean water, education, health etc We feel that youth are already actively involved in volunteerism and that this should be used as a means of youth empowerment and active participation in the eradication process.

Access to Information – Access to vital information on education, health issues, job training, etc will enhance the ability of all partners to effectively develop appropriate programs geared towards the eradication of poverty and the development of democratic societies.

Financial Problems/Challenges Facing Developing Countries - The other main issue is the fact that poverty among youth can never be adequately addressed if the outstanding external debt of developing countries remains in its present form. Money is too often unfairly distributed and those that suffer are the youth since money is not available for their health, education and development.

The three recommendations took into account the impacting factors mentioned above and, through many round table discussions, the working group agreed on three recommendations to be included into the *Braga Youth Action Plan*.

The working group on Youth, Poverty Eradication and Development, taking into consideration the importance of our recommendations, agreed on measurable, follow-up initiatives. We commit ourselves to create and utilise the follow-up mechanisms, as well as urge the particular aforementioned actors in this effort. Young women and men must be recognised and supported as a powerful force in the eradication of poverty.

Follow-up for recommendation #7:
The follow-up committee of the Braga Initiative on the Debt Crisis will organise regional seminars before the year 2000 to assess the impact of the debt crisis in general and with regards to youth in particular. These regional seminars will lead to a joint international conference before the year 2001.

The United Nations Youth Unit should create a special fund for the follow-up process of the Braga Initiative on the Debt Crisis. The United Nations General Assembly should reach an agreement on how to finance the Braga Initiative follow-up process. To facilitate the world-wide youth NO campaign for the cancellation of debt, a world wide web-site should be created to provide information on the Braga Initiative and to offer opportunities for young women and men throughout the world to endorse this initiative. This world-wide campaign of youth NGOs should collect one billion signatures by the year 2000.

Follow-up for recommendation #8:
Upon its completion, the United Nations Youth Unit s training kit on youth and poverty eradication should be promoted and widely distributed to youth organisations as a guide for poverty eradication. The number of kits distributed, and to whom, should be reported to youth organisations as well as published on the United Nations web-page every six months by the United Nations Youth Unit. Beginning with the initial distribution, usefulness of this kit should be evaluated every 18 months and the evaluation should be included in the six-month report.

Every two years, youth organisations should convene regional conferences during which each organisation presents an evaluation of their progress in poverty eradication programs. These evaluations should be made available to the public.

Follow-up for recommendation #9:
The United Nations International Year of Volunteers in 2001 represents a great opportunity for measuring our progress in eradicating poverty and should be used as a basis for our

follow-up activities. Information and partnership are vital to the poverty eradication process. Therefore, the United Nations Youth Unit should create an Orange Book compiling a list of existing youth-led volunteer programs. The Orange Book should be distributed at the international conference.

The media should be utilised as a vehicle in a campaign publicising the achievements of volunteer programs, expressing the need for more volunteers, and informing young women and men about the existing volunteer opportunities. This campaign should reach all levels and encompass all sectors of youth. Youth-led volunteer efforts should be included in the future publication on the International Year of Volunteers in 2001, promoting and educating all major actors. Youth volunteerism should be included in the publication by December 1999.

Within five years of the joint international conference in 2001, the follow-up committee will evaluate the process and the outcomes of the Braga Initiative on the Debt Crisis.

The Working Group on Youth, Poverty Eradication and Development is resolved in its approach towards the eradication of poverty. We firmly believe that the afore-mention recommendations can effectively page the road towards the attainment of a noble and achievable goal – THE TOTAL ERADICATION OF POVERTY.

We sincerely hope our recommendations are implemented, bearing in mind they came from youth that represented various social backgrounds across the globe and they are the end result of long hours of deliberations aimed at identifying the best solutions to the challenges that are presently posed by poverty.

We assent.

Appendix

BRAGA INITIATIVE ON THE DEBT CRISIS

We, the Youth Participants, representing young people all over the world, gathered in Braga Portugal (2-7 August 1998) for the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System to the discuss the theme Youth Participation for Human Development" hereby declare our concern for the international debt crisis facing many countries of the developing world and hereby declare our initiative toward the elimination of that debt.

In recognition of major international initiatives, we the Youth Participants underscore our concern with the external debt crisis facing many countries of the developing world. The external debt crisis affects all social groups of these countries, but its impact on young men and women is very devastating because it takes away the necessary financial resources that could have been invested in their development. This means that the lives of millions of young people will go to waste because of inadequate investment in education and training, health, employment programs, leisure-time activities, environmental development, poverty reduction and eradication programs, economic development, national youth policies, housing, cultural programs, women's development, programs for indigenous

people and rural development.

Based on the problems caused by the external debt crisis, we believe that external debt must be cancelled now! We recognise that the request for cancellation of the debt has been made over and over again, but up to this moment in time, the debt situation of many countries has not improved. Many countries and people are yet to see any urgent and adequate response to it. While we recognise the attempts of some countries and institutions to address the debt crisis, we, the Youth Delegates, clearly state we are not satisfied with the progress made thus far. We want the external debts to be cancelled, and the resources released to be used for fully meeting human needs!

We, the Youth Delegates, fully recognise that a largé part of humanity is facing a serious threat of socio-economic collapse because of the external debt crisis. The external debt crisis is the tragedy of globalisation and a very serious threat to the youths of the 21st century. We want to clearly state that we condemn this situation.

We call on all people of rich countries to join with youth organisations to fight against this major obstacle to human development. The external debt crisis is not only a threat to life in the heavily indebted poor countries, but it is also a threat to the conscience, morality, and sense of human decency to the people of rich countries. We believe that the people in rich countries have a golden opportunity to express their solidarity with people in poor countries. That opportunity is now!

We, the Youth Delegates, emphasise that many youths have been active in the campaign against the external debts, especially in combating its debilitating consequences. We also stress we are ready to participate in any constructive initiative and efforts to bring an end to the debt crisis.

As such, we, the Youth Participants, pledge to continue our activism in the following ways:

In accordance with the *Braga Youth Action Plan*, the holding of regional seminars before the year 2000 to assess the impact of the crisis, which will lead to a joint international conference before the year 2001.

A joint committee with representatives from every continent will assist the United Nations, its agencies, and youth NGOs in the preparation, realisation, and evaluation of the ideas expressed herein.

Youth NGOs throughout the world will join a campaign to show universal support for the cancellation of debt by signing this Initiative; by disseminating this Initiative and other information on the crisis, and, by generating financial resources for the regional and international gatherings. We especially urge youth NGOs from northern countries to lobby their governments both for the immediate elimination of debt and for financial resources for the national and international gatherings.

We, the Youth Participants, declare that this Braga Initiative on the Debt Crisis is an open statement. We look forward to its expansion by national delegations and regional seminars

in anticipation of the joint international conference.

This Braga Initiative on the Debt Crisis is now effective immediately with the signing by the youth participants here gathered.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

4. PARTICIPATION OF ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

Annexes to Recommendation # 10

Visual impairment: Accessibility, education and employment are key issues to which blindness organisations generally attach great importance.

The visually impaired are often marginalized because information is not at hand in accessible formats meaning for instance in Braille, large print or on cassette. Awareness as well as financial resources are among the factors influencing accessibility.

Lack of access to the physical environment is faced by most disability groups, among those groups blind and partially sighted persons. Signs, time tables, choice of too similar colours for floor and walls etc more often than not cause barriers.

General education is the basis for life. In many countries of the world visually impaired students are forced to attend schools for the blind which may sometimes lead to limited social integration. It must be considered of importance that blind and partially sighted students have the opportunity to go to mainstream schools with their sighted fellows. However, special schools can of course suit the needs of for example multi-handicapped blind children.

Unemployment and unequal access to the labour market comprise a third issue of concern to visually impaired persons. In addition, it is a pity but a general fact that mostly when two persons, disabled and non-disabled, apply for a job, the latter one is employed even though they may be totally equally qualified for a concerned profession. Despite diverse obstacles met in daily life it should be pointed out that the public all around the world has changed and is still changing their attitudes towards disabled people which is a key factor in promoting and enhancing equal opportunities and full participation of ALL people.

Young people marginalized for health and physical reasons: Equal opportunities and access as well as full participation and exercise of Human Rights should be given to all disabled women and men in all communities, societies and cultures. Special attention should be given to disabled girls and women since they often face double discrimination due to gender and disability. Account should also be taken of different needs and priorities of developing and developed countries. Access to the environment, information, to education and employment form essential parts of integration into society. In policy-making and planning the United Nations STANDARD RULES on the Equalisation of Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities serves as an important instrument.

Equal Opportunities and Access:

1. All young people face many societal problems. Young disabled people have even more difficulties participating in society due to lack of equal opportunities, access and full participation. All institutions at all levels should join efforts to improve independent access of disabled persons to the physical environment (housing, buildings, public transport services, streets and other outdoor environments), information in accessible formats (Braille, large print, tapes, sign language, interpretation services, spoken information, simplified texts for people with comprehension difficulties etc) as well as suitable assistance devices and equipment (wheelchairs, Braillers and other tools for writing Braille, Braille displays, speech synthesisers, magnifiers, magnifying computer programs, hearing aids, text telephones, inductive loop systems, class radio systems, subtitles on TV etc). The media should be encouraged to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities.

Education:

2. Basic and higher education in mainstream schools should be available to all young disabled people. Children and their relatives should have the possibility to choose between different ways of education in special and mainstream schools, be they public or private. Disabled students should be provided with all assistance such as additional lessons, devices and equipment they need in order to pursue education on equal terms with non-disabled students.

Employment:

3. Integration of disabled people into open employment should be supported. The adjustment of workplaces is a very important issue. Sheltered and supported employment may be solutions for some disabled persons who are unable to work in the open labour market.

Implementation:

National level:

Governments should act as a role model as regards promotion of disability-related issues, allocating money to organisations of persons with disabilities in order for them to organise internally (defence of interests, infrastructure, training of co-workers and specialists etc) and external (public campaigns, awareness-raising etc). Each disability group is different and contributes unique perspectives. However, organisations of disabled people should join efforts politically and economically when appropriate. Governments should give a good example by employing young disabled people and formulating criteria for employment opportunities of persons with disabilities. We propose that within each governmental body there be a representative from among disabled people.

Regional level:

Cooperation and coordination of work within the disability field should be promoted at the regional level. Exchange of experience, information and best practices may be fruitful for everyone concerned. Regional unions of disability groups ought to defend the interests of disabled people towards regional United Nations bodies, IGOs and NGOs.

International level:

Internationally, organisations of persons with disabilities should approach the international community with their concerns. For promotion of all rights of people with disabilities, emphasis should be placed on cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies. Networking among organisations of persons with disabilities fighting for the same kind of general rights of disability groups should be highlighted so as to strengthen political influence and economic resources as well as development. Participation in international youth events should be made equally possible to disabled youth as others. The World Youth Forum of the United Nations System is one example of such events.

Conclusion:

Organisations of persons with disabilities should be consulted regarding all issues that concern policy- and decision-making as well as planning, implementation and evaluation of programs, projects and other actions within the disability field.

5. YOUTH ORGANISATIONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

The working group on "Youth Organisations and the United Nations System" consisted of approximately 45 people. The participants represented national and international NGOs, the specialized agencies, funds and programs of the United Nations system, such as UNESCO, UNV, UNFPA, and UNEP, as well as the Youth Unit/ Division for Social Policy and Development, the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and the ECOSOC NGO Section.

In addition to the *Braga Youth Action Plan*, the working group discussed the following items over the three days:

- A general review of the United Nations system
- Modes of involvement with the specialized agencies, funds and programs of the United Nations system
- How to establish working relationships with the specialized agencies, funds and programs of the United Nations system, as well as consultative/roster status with ECOSOC and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat

The group divided into two subgroups entitled Voluntary Service as a Means for Participation", and "Policy Involvement with the United Nations system".

Voluntary Service as a Means for Participation

Within this subgroup, the following points were highlighted:

- Voluntary service is a mode of participation that is an appropriate path at every level of teaching and qualification.

- Voluntary service is a means by which youth participate in the development of their society and resolve problems within the social and economic spheres.

- It is the role of youth to reflect on how voluntary service can become equipped to fulfill the needs of youth. This may be achieved through national, regional and

international projects

- Voluntary service is a means by which youth can contribute to the growth of society within the framework of a youth organisation, and also on an individual basis. Voluntary service enables youth of all ages and at all levels of qualification to act for the benefit of the community at the national, regional and international level through exchange and co-operation between organisations.

- Today, voluntary service is playing an increasingly important role in numerous societies. This is due to the fact that voluntary services intervene more frequently as complimentary actors in actions undertaken by governments and international organisations. In some countries these services are considered an alternative option to national service.

- Voluntary service is an educational tool that not only contributes to the technical training and teaching of volunteers but can also aid the individual to develop a humanitarian perspective. At an international level, exchanges among volunteers lead to increased tolerance and cultural understanding. International volunteers can contribute to reconciliation and peacemaking.

- Upon the announcement of the year 2001 as the international year for volunteers, the CCIVS (Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service) and the UNV, assumed responsibility to promote the concept of voluntary service and to reinforce existing programs The involvement and contribution of youth is essential in meeting this challenge.

Policy Involvement with the United Nations system

Within this subgroup the discussion focused on topics and issues listed below:

- Information

Identify youth-relevant information and make it youth friendly and easily accessible.

- Networking

Who is doing what, where and when? Use e-mail, fax, phone
Acknowledge the need for networking among youth NGOs to find common approaches, exchange experiences and share resources.

- Policy coordination

Integrated cross-sectoral approach to United Nations youth policies
Increasing coordination between United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programs working with youth issues.

- Consultation within the specialized agencies

Establishing consultation links and structures that allow youth participation in the decision-making process such as the UNESCO external and internal youth-advisory bodies.

- Youth representatives in the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies

Reaffirming the call for including youth representatives in national delegations to the General Assembly and other United Nations system conferences, commissions and bodies, we recognise the responsibility of youth organisations to be representative of those on whose behalf they speak. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of these representatives to consult their constituencies, disseminate information and report back on the issues discussed.

- Consultative status with United Nations agencies

Applications for consultative status can be complex and lengthy processes. It is therefore crucial to provide information and additional guidance to youth NGOs in order to increase the number of such groups with this status. Acquiring consultative status will allow these NGOs greater access to the United Nations system and increase their input into decision-making processes, as well as strengthen cooperation between these organisations and the United Nations system.

- Youth internships

In order to equalise access for youth to United Nations internship opportunities, internships should be made widely available at the regional and national levels. Furthermore, wealthier countries might contribute to a general fund that would be used to balance the geographical distribution in the United Nations internship program at Headquarters.

- Funding

It was felt that there is a lack of funding for youth United Nations projects, consequently, long-term planning and continuity are hindered. Making a policy is making a commitment: if there are policy statements on youth with commitments, such as the *World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*, they are meaningless without the funding to implement them.

- Youth NGOs at the United Nations

The group discussed the need for sustained contact among the youth NGOs participating in ECOSOC Commissions and discussed the practicality of a coordinating focal point.

- Focus

We need not only focus our attention at the international level, but also on the regional, national and local levels. It is important to recognise the great potential and value for our work with the economic and social commissions at the regional level and with youth theme groups at the national and local levels.

- LET'S SHARE OUR GOOD PRACTICES AND MULTIPLY THEM!

Actions and Indicators of Success:

We commit ourselves to work for increased and better collaboration on issues related to the work of the United Nations

- between and among youth NGOs;
- between youth NGOs and the Youth Unit of the United Nations secretariat; and
- between youth NGOs and the specialized agencies, funds and programs of

the United Nations system.

The working group agreed that the implementation of the following actions would also indicate success in fulfilling the chapter "Youth Organisations and the United Nations System" of the *Braga Youth Action Plan*:

- Five to ten young people (1 or 2 from each of the United Nations regions) working in the Youth Unit of the United Nations Secretariat, ensuring effective information exchange and channels of communication between youth NGOs and the United Nations system, from the international to the national level. These persons may be sponsored by NGOs or Governments, such as the October 1998 initiative by Denmark to sponsor a youth from Nicaragua to work in the Youth Unit of the United Nations secretariat or the Commission on Sustainable Development youth coordinator in 1996-97 who was sponsored by an NGO;

- Increasing collaborative projects between youth NGOs and specialized agencies, funds and programs of the United Nations system;

- Increasing the number of representative youth delegates on national delegations to the United Nations General Assembly;

- Increasing the number of representative youth delegates to legislative bodies within the United Nations system such as the UNESCO General Conference and others;

- Increasing the number of ECOSOC Commissions where there is a youth coordinator such as at the Commission on Sustainable Development;

- Equalising opportunities for internships throughout the United Nations system for young people from all regions; The clear and visible levelling of representation between regions by the year 2000 is an indicator of success in this area;

- An increasing number of requests by youth NGOs for United Nations information at the national level, as a sign of the efficient and effective distribution of United Nations information and the greater level of engagement by youth at the national level;

- Providing future World Youth Forums with necessary funds that will also ensure adequate translation for effective communication;

- Increasing levels of contributions from Governments to the United Nations Youth Fund to be used for youth-related projects and the World Youth Forum;

- Improving regional representation at future World Youth Forums;

- Enhancing mechanisms of youth participation throughout the United Nations system, such as the recently established youth advisory board of UNESCO;

- Extending the degree to which "youth" is on the agenda within regional platforms of the United Nations system. The variety of issues related to the subject of youth should also be increased;

- Increasing the number of youth NGOs with consultative status with ECOSOC;

- Increasing the use of United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programs - such as UNICEF and UNESCO - as centres for youth programs and projects and for co-ordination between youth NGOs, governments and the United Nations system;

- Increasing the number of appointments by specialized agencies, funds and programs of the United Nations system of young people and/or voluntary youth NGO delegates to projects in the field. An appointed UNEP youth delegate from the UNEP Global Youth Forum serves as an example;

- Considering the idea in the General Assembly of holding a Youth Millennium Assembly in the year 2000 alongside the People's Assembly; and

- Increasing the outreach to unorganised, underrepresented and marginalized groups in the programs and projects by the specialized agencies,funds and programs of the United Nations system.

6. EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Over 30 countries were represented in the working group on Education for the 21st Century, which led to very diverse and interesting ideas being expressed by all. The working group split into two sub-groups on formal and non-formal education. Each sub-group identified a number of key issues that were developed over the three days of discussion to formulate our final three recommendations to the Drafting Committee. This report first discusses each of these recommendations, then discusses participation in education, and concludes with a brief description of other relevant issues discussed.

Access to Education (Recommendation #16)

Rationale

Access to education will always be a fundamental concern of people interested in education systems around the globe. Despite the recognition of the need for universal free and equal access to education, the reality is often not as ideal. The recommendation aims to reaffirm young people's commitment to the need for education for all.

Measurable Indicators

Given that the recommendation calls for government, UNESCO and international community action, the only form of evaluation is simply to see if these bodies do in fact implement the Forum's suggestions. Of course, it is the role of the youth organisations present at the Forum to lobby governments and the United Nations to ensure that this happens.

Non-Formal Education (Recommendation #17)

Rationale

It was felt that the lack of recognised legitimacy for non-formal forms of education was an omission from the 1995 *World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*. The group identified a lack of resources devoted to non-formal education, partially due to the artificial division between formal and non-formal education. The recommendation aims to redress this situation.

Measurable Indicators

After two to five years, evaluations will address relevant issues, including how effective the NGO advisory role is, to what extent such programs have been implemented, the number of countries which have developed departments in their education ministries, and how effective non-formal education has been in gaining accreditation from formal education institutions and other bodies.

Content of Education (Recommendation #18)

Rationale

As contributors to the emerging global village, young people must be educated in a variety of new global realities. The group recognised that current curricula often ignore the international perspective, and thus do not fully equip young people for the twenty-first century. The recommendation addresses a number of key international issues which all members of the group felt were integral to human development.

Measurable Indicators

The creation of support networks for providers of education focussing on the development of educational content in both formal and non-formal sectors, new teaching materials, and adequate training for educators is one measurable indicator.

Participation in Education

The recommendation on Participation in Education was not included in the final three recommendations presented to the drafting committee because there was another group dealing specifically with the topic of participation. However, the group still thought that participation was a crucial issue, and the recommendation which would have been presented to the committee is reproduced below:

The World Youth Forum recognizes as a right the empowerment of youth via full and active participation and representation in decision-making in education, and calls upon governments of Member States to do the same. We call for the United Nations system as well as the governments of Member States to initiate and support youth NGO educational programs including the establishment and proliferation of student representative bodies, youth-training-youth, leadership training, and exchange programs for young leaders.

Rationale

The group identified a lack of youth voices in decision making and implementation in both formal and non-formal sectors of education. Young people should be empowered to contribute to the education system in which they are integral components, both as students and also as educators. The recommendation examines ways in which this may be done.

Measurable Indicators

The implementation of the recommendation may be measured by monitoring the number of pupil and student organisations and their influence, the number of volunteers involved in the education process, and the number of youth oriented and youth driven educational programs.

Other Issues

Education around the world is an expansive field allowing discussion of a myriad of issues. Unfortunately, the group was unable to incorporate all its thoughts and all the important matters of discussion into the four final recommendations. Briefly, other issues discussed included education as an investment by governments rather than as an expense, the mobility of students and exchange programs, the need for greater global recognition of qualifications from any institution, and the reaffirmation of education as a fundamental human right as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Conclusion

The workshop on Education for the 21st Century proved to be an extremely constructive and enlightening forum for discussion about the extreme importance of education in the lives of young people, and as a vital tool for solving many of the world's most pressing problems. This brief report does not do justice to the views expressed, but does provide a very accessible summary of the working group's debate. Throughout the discussion, there was one recurring theme - the role of education as a lifelong process for all in which the United Nations has a vital role to play.

7. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Young people often encounter difficulties in entering productive employment and youth unemployment is chronic in many countries of the world. The ILO estimates that more than 60 million young people are unemployed today. This means that more than one in ten of economically active young people are unemployed. The burden of unemployment falls most heavily on young people. Youth unemployment rates are, on average, three times the adult unemployment rates. When one considers that in developing countries the problem of youth unemployment is compounded by underemployment and poor quality informal sector employment, the situation is even worse than appears from an examination of open unemployment.

Youth unemployment represents a massive waste of countries' human resources. It also undermines social cohesion. Unemployed young people are often prevented from participating in political, economic and social spheres of society. Finding no way of fulfilling their potential within society, unemployed young people may be forced to turn to crime, drug-abuse and trafficking and other forms of anti-social behaviour.

Youth unemployment is a complex and difficult problem. Its solution requires mutual commitments from governments, the social partners, NGOs and the United Nations system. Action is required at different levels. Macroeconomic policies directed at promoting employment growth are a necessary prerequisite to combat youth unemployment. This

should be complemented by action at the microeconomic level with policies aimed at improving education and vocational training and promoting small enterprise development.

Employment creation for young people is not enough, we need to ensure that the type of jobs offered are of high quality, safe and sustainable. Low wage, dangerous and insecure employment does not contribute to the social development of young people.

We divided the Employment Working Group into three sub-groups that tackled the following issues:

- International economic and social context
- Employment policies and programs
- Employment, education and training

International economic and social context

The subgroup discussed the consequences of globalisation. It found that trade liberalisation and economic integration though it has been beneficial for some well-trained workers, created insecurity for many others. Globalisation has divided the world into winners and losers, the winners being those nations which can present themselves as competitive in the market. Often this competitiveness means compromising on working conditions and wages. We found that this trend is especially relevant to young workers and particularly to marginalized groups such as the long-term unemployed, women, the disabled etc. The undesirable consequences of globalisation affect young people everywhere but developing countries the more severely. These effects often retard economic development of the country, while generating great revenues from exports.

The undesirable consequences of globalisation should and must be mitigated by universal application of the fundamental rights of workers, by a reformed system of investment which is more equally distributed, and by increased commitment from governments to ensure that economic growth is not at the expense of the poorest members of the global community.

Though foreign direct investment from multinational corporations has contributed to job creation in the developing countries, trade agreements often require significant concessions in order to create a "safe environment" for this investment. Structural Adjustment Programs and austerity measures discourage public expenditures that would help create more and better employment for young people. This problem is compounded by the burden of repayment of external debt. The relief of this debt and the transfer of repayment spending into social programs such as education, training, and building of infrastructure would help reverse this trend

Employment policies and programs

The subgroup discussed the importance of targeting youth employment programs. Close targeting of schemes and their tailoring to participants' needs are important both because such schemes are likely to be more effective in promoting post-program employment and because unemployment is by no means spread evenly across the youth population.

Programs need to be aimed at those young people who are in most need of help in order to counter the dangers of social exclusion.

It was discussed that stimulating self-employment opportunities is also fundamental to combating youth unemployment. Recent problems for young women and men are lack of funds, lack of management skills and lack of information about where to get both. It is important that governments, NGOs and the international community provide young people with funding, information and training material so that they can start up their own business. Nevertheless, this is not enough. It should also be ensured that the self-employment opportunities are sustainable. Governments should encourage the development of self-employment by examining, with the aim of reducing, any obstacles which may exist, especially those within tax and social security regimes, to self-employment and the setting up of small businesses. However, during the session, some participants stressed some other problems that exist in their countries to start up business. The existence of organised cliques also hinders the development of self-employment opportunities. Governments should also work toward the elimination of such obstacles.

Employment, education and training

The group discussed issues related to the employment education and training of young people. The group stressed the need to extend basic educational opportunities to all as a basic right. They also suggested that often the organisation of educational systems is inappropriate for the world of work. Educational systems have not adapted adequately to changing labour market realities and the local communities needs. There is also a need to ensure that education was more geared to the vocational needs of young people.

There is also a requirement for broader based educational opportunities so that, later in life young people can adapt to the changing requirements of the world of work. Another issue that was stressed was the need to integrate educational and employment policies. NGOs could also play a role in this through providing informal educational opportunities outside of schools.

The issue was also raised of the need to enhance the capacity of NGOs themselves so that they can effectively play a role in the linking of the worlds of education and employment. NGOs often lack the necessary financial resources and the necessary training to play this role in the best manner. There was a need to enhance the capacity of NGOs through training programs and access to finance. One means to facilitate this process was through the setting up of a network between NGOs involved in youth employment, training and education issues and the United Nations system. The network would be based around a website providing links to sites of relevance to employment, training and education issues. However, more traditional hard copy information would also be available to NGOs without immediate access to the internet. Amongst other things, the site would contain information on the NGOs and International Organisations themselves, printed material in electronic format produced by the United Nations system, project updates and experiences and ideas on how to obtain financial and technical support for projects.

Conclusions

The problem of youth unemployment is both serious and complex. It is serious in both its

extent and consequences and complex in terms of the difficulty of finding effective solutions. The fight against youth unemployment requires action at the international, national and local levels. Effective action requires macroeconomic initiatives, the integration of educational and employment policies as well as direct initiatives at the microeconomic level. Finally, when talking about "The Problem" of youth unemployment, it should be recalled that it is not young people who are the problem, it is unemployment.

Youth Employment Policies and Programs (Recommendation #19)

Problem:

Insufficient and inadequate employment policies and programs for young people.

Objectives:

Improve the design and implementation of youth employment programs.

Content:

An evaluation of youth employment programs in different countries and contexts. This should comprise evaluation of self-employment programs as well as programs to promote employment. The emphasis should be on programs aimed helping disadvantaged young people into employment. The evaluation should look at issues such as the sustainability of jobs created once programs are completed, the quality of jobs created and the contribution of the project to social development. The evaluation should also have regional balance in terms of the countries that are covered.

Implementing Agencies:

Selected NGOs and the ILO

NGO Capacity Building (Recommendation #20)

Problems:

Lack of communication between the NGOs and the United Nations system and the lack of capacity within NGOs. Lack of knowledge about existing projects and lack of access to financial support.

Objectives:

Increase the level of communication between NGOs and the United Nations system and improve the capacity of NGOs to implement youth employment programs.

Content:

1) Provision of access to relevant facilities

2) Creation of a Web site. The Website would contain, amongst other things, information on the NGOs and International Organisations themselves, printed material in electronic format produced by the United Nations system, project updates and experiences and ideas on how to obtain financial and technical support for projects. The Website would be based on a series of links to sites relevant to youth employment issues.

Implementing Agencies:

Relevant agencies from the United Nations system and NGOs

Implementation:
The Website will be coordinated by an international NGO possibly on a rotational basis. It will be overseen by a committee of youth NGOs and United Nations Agencies. The Website will be financed by contributions from the United Nations system.

Workers Rights Education Campaign (Recommendation #21)
Problems:
Lack of knowledge among young workers about their rights in the workplace and what they can do to safeguard them. Without this knowledge, many young people accept conditions that violate conventions and agreements on workplace rights. Though this knowledge must be distributed to all areas of society, as youth NGOs we feel a special responsibility to educate our peers on the grassroots level.

Objectives:
To encourage youth NGOs to get involved in the ongoing work by the ILO to publicise its Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work to Governments, Employers and Workers associations, NGOs and other bodies. In addition, youth NGOs will organise, with the financial support of the United Nations system, an information campaign directed at young workers.

Content:
1) Involvement of youth NGOs in the national meetings organised by the ILO, publicising the Declaration.
2) The development of youth-specific informational materials about the Declaration and other ILO resolutions and conventions.
3) Seminars and conferences at the national, regional and international level to inform and train young people in the distribution of information and the empowerment of their peers.

Implementing Agencies:
Relevant agencies from the United Nations system and NGOs

Implementation:
A volunteer committee of youth NGOs will work together with the ILO to develop a plan of action for the campaign. Within the next several months, an initial conference will be held, organised by NGOs, to develop the campaign materials and discuss strategies.

8. YOUTH, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

A working group on Health and Development was held during the World Youth Forum in Braga between August 2-7, 1998. It was facilitated by a joint group of representatives from UN agencies working in the field of health and youth NGOs. The working group, that consisted of approximately 60 participants, met the entire Tuesday 4 August, and the mornings of 5 and 6 August 1998.

Objectives of the Working Group
The Working Group on Youth Health and Development had the following objectives:
- to share information about the situation in different countries, and inform one another

about interventions that have taken place around the world
- to identify the successes and failures of various projects and interventions, and the gaps that still exist
- to develop recommendations on youth health and development for inclusion in the Braga Youth Action Plan.

The Working Method

The working group met alternatively in a plenary where major presentations were made, and in smaller discussion groups. At the plenary, participants were introduced to the major health issues of concern to youth and heard about the relationship between health and development. The smaller groups then identified three major intervention areas (policies and legislation, services, and IEC), and discussed important specific interventions in relation to a variety of health issues. Plenary presentations and discussion followed. Three small working groups each focussed their discussions on the lessons-learned from, and the shortcomings of, one of the major areas. A fourth French speaking group dealt with IEC. The second and third day of the Forum were dedicated exclusively to developing recommendations on these three areas.

Integrated Approach to Health of Young People

- The integrated approach to health of young people demands commitment to and implementation of the recommendations by 2003; collaboration between Government ministries and other related NGOS and Inter-Governmental Organisations; mechanisms to ensure coordination of policy and implementation of services and Information, Education, Communication (IEC); commitment of human and financial resources and infrastructures; monitoring and evaluation including review of the World Youth Forum outcome; cultural and gender sensitivity; and respect for the diversity of youth.

Identifying major intervention areas for youth health and development

The following table illustrates the three major intervention areas that were identified, and the specific issues that correspond to these areas.

Policies and Legislation	Services	Information, Education and Communication (IEC)
Application of the laws Sexual education in the curricula Interventions to improve working conditions Training of traditional leaders Ensuring young fathers and mothers stay in school	Family planning services Counseling services Church programs Youth friendly services Monitoring and improving sanitary material Immunization and vaccination Infectious diseases: education and services More HIV interventions Better health systems Peer counselors Condom distribution in different centers Services for "invisible"/ marginalized youth	Publications Life Skills Education Peer group education and rights Youth seminars Use of media Training of youth Creative, interactive activities e.g. drama theatre, poetry Participatory research methodologies Targeting policy-makers Educating the girl child Vocational training Microenterprise IEC distribution, including in rural areas Information skills Health information provided by foster parents Emphasis on facts, not morality Emphasis on self confidence Health-training for parents and care-givers Parent teacher associations New communication channels

At the same time some important health issues, strategies, target groups and interventions were identified:

Specific issues
Education about drugs and alcohol abuse
Support for substance abuse
Education about mental health
Rape, sexual abuse and violence
Teenage/Early pregnancy and other sexual and reproductive health issues
Female genital mutilation
Environmental health
Malnutrition
Freedom from destructive traditions

Participation
Empowering young people
Competent youth representatives
Participation of girls and young women
Youth participation in foster care
Youth involvement in decision-making

Vulnerable youth
Linking children in need with families
Orphans
Support young women, girl child
Refugee support
Juvenile justice
Marginalized groups
Street children
Disabled youth
Accept diversity

Family
Role of family
Taboo subjects
Education of parents
Parent child exchange of information

Resources /Networking
Libraries Research materials
Regional resource centers
Debates
Consultation centers
Networking
NGO coordination networks
Network Government and NGOs
More youth clubs

The working group identified three recommendations for the *Braga Youth Action Plan*. What follows is a further elaboration of strategies relevant to each of the key proposals. Specifically, action should include:

Policies and Legislation (Recommendation # 22)
To ensure the successful implementation, monitoring, evaluation and integration of a national youth health policy into an action plan, the following should be in place: strong political commitment, an effective and responsive mechanism for coordinating the various levels of government, public outreach and awareness, sufficient financial and human resources, research/needs assessment, and pilot projects.

The policy should be formulated/reviewed and implemented by the year 2003.

The Ministry of Health serves a coordinating function at the national level. The ministry partners (Ministry of health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information and

Broadcasting, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Environment) in collaboration with young people, youth-related NGOs, UN Agencies and other related organisations, are responsible for the formulation and implementation of the policy and strategic plans. It is the responsibility of the Government to ensure the awareness of the policies at ALL LEVELS. Commitment on the part of Governments, young people, and other key stake holders is an essential factor in ensuring the successful implementation of the policies.

The Regional Commissions are responsible for following-up on these recommendations, and presenting the progress of implementation at the next World Youth Forum.

International Organisations and the United Nations' agencies should assist in providing funding, technical support, coordination, monitoring and evaluation.

Services (Recommendation # 23)
All health services for young people whether public, private or traditional, must be comprehensive. This means that health services and counselling must be based on the diverse needs of youth, of good quality, flexible and sensitive to traditions as well as youth culture.

To ensure *accessibility*, the services must have a convenient location and hours of operation, and must be affordable, confidential, practical, gender-sensitive, well-publicized, adequately resourced, able to provide outreach services, and connected with and supported by the community.

To ensure youth *participation*, young people must actively participate in the assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of all health services. The following pre-requisites are necessary for this to take place: a financial and administrative commitment; appropriate training for youth and professionals; leadership shared among youth; and a defined organisational structure in which a clear place is guaranteed for youth.

These services must be offered in a spirit of cooperation between and among youth, NGOs, Governments and the United Nations.

In sum, youth-friendly health services should be provided which are comprehensive, accessible and participatory.

Information, Education, Communication (Recommendation # 24)
The implementation of effective IEC interventions can be strengthened by the following means:

- Improve research, monitoring and evaluation of interventions for youth health and development by actively involving young people. This will help identify effective interventions, ensure sustainability and help successful interventions go to scale

- Promote the use of creative and interactive methodologies that build life skills and strengthen self-esteem, as a direct means of promoting health and reducing health risk

behavior.

- Provide parents and guardians, service providers, teachers, religious and community leaders with information about youth health and development, and afford them the skills to create a positive and supportive environment for young people.

- Develop and implement a clearly defined national policy for youth, in partnership and close collaboration with government ministries and youth NGOs working in all aspects of health. The policy should focus on health education and service-provision, including sexual and reproductive health.

YOUTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

9. YOUTH AND THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Human Rights Education working group first met along with the Youth Rights Charter working group in a general session. After brief introductions, the Human Rights Education working groups separated into a smaller group of about twenty youth. We presented some general thought on Human Rights education and indicated the need to include marginalized youth in any action plans eventually adopted.

We focused on how to involve youth in Human Rights education. The universal Human Rights are contained in previous United Nations documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights explain universal individual Human Rights. Therefore, we discussed how to involve youth in the education of these enumerated rights.

Rights inherently reflect corresponding responsibilities. Since the *Braga Youth Action Plan* focuses only on youth rights, responsibilities have not been specifically discussed. However, it was pointed out that the enumerated youth rights implicitly require youth responsibilities.

A United Nations trainer explained the importance of innovative approaches in methodology and presented one type of methodology. Human Rights education should explain the skills, information, and content required for education. The instructor used interaction such as icebreakers, simulation and role play games in order to emphasize innovative methods of teaching. Human Rights education should also include empathy, justice, equity, peace, attitudes, tolerance, and be applicable to real problems.

In addition, Human Rights education must necessarily be taught through values particular to each social and religious culture. Human Rights are indivisible and universal and Human Rights education cannot be taught in a value-free environment. Whenever possible, Human Rights education should be accomplished through those who hold a proper respect for the intended audience. In addition, the family was discussed as one of the most important training grounds for Human Rights education; that ideally parents should teach their own children at an early age about Human Rights. However, the lack of education in some

families increases the importance of Human Rights education. The youth of today will become the parents of tomorrow, and we must raise a generation of youth trained and prepared to emulate and respect Human Rights.

The group was asked to rank some of the universal rights according to their importance, through a process of bidding upon the rights. Through this process, the class indicated that some of the basic rights such as education, shelter, food, and health were more important than other rights, even more so than association.

Suggestions were made that Human Rights education be split into the three groups of enabling environment, knowledge, and the development of effective strategies for Human Rights education. The first recommendation from the working group was that Human Rights education be recognized as a basic human right. In many countries, the knowledge to aid youth in combating such Human Rights violations, including the knowledge of their actual Human Rights, are denied. Therefore, Human Rights education must be made available to all youth, thus helping youth to realize greater freedoms. While youth must first learn their own Human Rights, as early as possible thereafter youth should be utilized in actually educating others regarding Human Rights. Youth have many characteristics such as creativity and energy that are often undervalued by educational institutions.

The second recommendation from the working groups was that the institutions responsible for Human Rights education need to ensure active participation of youth organisations in the decision-making process, as well as the implementation of Human Rights education. Youth must be provided a safe environment to facilitate such educational process and methodologies. This means that institutions should not hamper youth in their actions to associate with one another. Institutions responsible for Human Rights education should be interpreted as broadly as possible, so that little room exists for any organisation-- private or public-- to deny youth the opportunity to actively pursue Human Rights education.

However, the burden should not fall fully upon the Governments, United Nations agencies, educational authorities, or private entities, to activate youth in Human Rights education. Rather, youth NGOs should also take advantage of the facilitation that institutions are called upon to provide. These institutions must make a sincere and respectful effort to involve youth in meaningful ways of Human Rights education, including consultation with youth for educational policies and procedures before those policies are completely developed by the institutions.

The final recommendation from the working groups was that youth organisations should commit themselves to develop and implement effective strategies to teach Human Rights education. These strategies should focus both formal, informal, and non-formal education. First, formal education should be facilitated through school curriculums where youth are able to get an early start upon understanding the Human Rights to which they are entitled. Then, informal and non-formal education should be utilized to increase the understanding of all individuals within any society of the rights that they have.

Youth should also be taught the specific skills that will be required to realize the right to Human Rights education. These skills include capacity-building, lobbying, and translating.

The youth should also be involved in translating Human Rights materials into all languages. In addition, each youth NGO should adopt a contact point for Human Rights education, which should be compiled onto a list made available to all. Finally, a Human Rights perspective should be developed throughout all educational processes.

The entire Human Rights Education working group then came together and endorsed the three recommendations made by the individual groups. The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education was also emphasized as an additional tool for Human Rights education.

10. YOUTH RIGHTS CHARTER AND A SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON YOUTH RIGHTS•

Compendium on Existing Youth Rights (Recommendation # 28)
The purpose for compiling a compendium on youth rights is the following:

- To have one "youth friendly", accessible document explaining youth their rights;
- To have a document available as a tool to be used by youth and youth NGOs as they lobby for youth issues at national, regional and international levels.

Background:
The basis for this compendium, as recommended in the *World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*, is:

- to develop and/or strengthen opportunities for young people to learn about their rights and responsibilities,
- to promote their social, political, economic, developmental and environmental participation,
- to remove obstacles that hinder their full contribution to society, and
- to respect, inter alia, freedom of association.

Following the recommendations of the working group on Youth Participation and Rights at the 2nd session of the World Youth Forum in 1996, the United Nations Youth Unit has developed, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies, a compilation of existing rights that are already included in United Nations Human Rights instruments and reports adopted by the General Assembly. These include:

- *Universal Declaration on Human Rights,*
- *International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights,*
- *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,*
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,*
- *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,*
- *International Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,*
- *United Nations International Conference on Population and Development, United Nations Conferences on Environment, Social Development, Habitat, Women,* and others.

• by "Youth Rights" the present document refers to the rights of young people as covered by the existing instruments of Human Rights

At the 3rd Session of the World Youth Forum in 1998, the Youth Rights working group recommended the production of a compendium on already existing youth rights. It was decided that youth rights should continue to be promoted and implemented through existing legislation and channels at the international, national, regional and local levels.

We recommend that the draft compilation of existing rights be made into a publication to be disseminated at all levels. This document should be available and accessible to all youth around the world.

Contents:
We recommend that the following items should be included in the compendium:

1. Preamble on the absence of concrete action to improve the situation of young people and to respect their Human Rights; the necessity for youth to know their rights; highlight gender discrimination and the rights of young women to have equal treatment and opportunities, the right to live in an atmosphere free of any discrimination.
2. Specific sections on youth and their main concerns, including:

- Youth in General
- Specific Groups of Youth (urban, rural, women, indigenous, youth living under conditions of racial/color/religious discrimination, discrimination based on sexual orientation, young workers, students, migrants and refugees, disabled youth, young offenders, drug addicts and alcoholics)
- Youth Participation (consultations on legislation and legal measures concerning youth, promote and protect the human environment, responsibilities to the community, involvement of youth in the decision-making process)
- Development (education, including educating for participation; health, including reproductive health; employment, culture, sports and leisure activities, freedom of mobility and communication)
- Peace, Security and Integrity (armed conflicts; housing; prevention of juvenile delinquency; protection of juveniles deprived of their liberty; freedom from torture or inhuman or degrading sanctions; rights under occupation, embargoes and blockades; social order and social services which respect the rights and freedoms of youth; the administration of juvenile justice)
- Standard of Living
- Reproductive Rights
- Individual and Collective Freedoms (freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience, religion; objection to compulsory military service and to alternative service, to marry and found a family, pluralistic and reliable information)
- Securing Access to Adequate Funds in Support of Youth Programs.

United Nations Special Rapporteur on Youth Rights (Recommendation # 29)
Participants in the third World Youth Forum of the United Nations System held in Braga, Portugal, August 1998 submit the following recommendations to support the implementation of recommendations made on youth rights:

- Following the international, regional and national commitments to youth as outlined in

the *World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (World Program);* and

- Respecting the purpose of the third World Youth Forum of the United Nations System to strengthen communications and relations between the UN and youth organisations and youth:

We recommend at the international level: the rapid appointment of a United Nations Special Rapporteur on Youth Rights before the end of 1999.

Terms of Reference

Appointed following general United Nations protocol and the following criteria of qualifications:

- Appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General by December 1999
- Mandated for three years, renewal possible only for two terms
- Submission of nominees from each region following consultation with youth NGOs and IGOs by August 1999. These nominations will be submitted by regional youth platforms, or relevant national bodies.
- Independent expert, experienced with Human Rights issues and directly involved with youth organisations
- Should ensure regular involvement and consultation with youth platforms, rapporteurs, youth, NGOs and IGOs at all levels throughout mandate
- Must be young, no older than 35 years of age at the time of appointment and renewal
- Effort must ensure the elimination of discrimination with every appointment to ensure fair and equal representation in the position over time.

Responsibilities:

1. The Special Rapporteur must submit an annual report to the UN General Assembly and the UN Commission of Human Rights before the end of the year 2000.
2. This report must detail successes and failures of global implementation of youth rights.
3. In addition, the Special Rapporteur must develop concrete recommendations for better implementation of youth rights in accordance with internationally adopted Human Rights treaties.
4. It is urged that this report be presented in person to every World Youth Forum starting in the year 2000.
5. The United Nations Commission for Social Development should provide active support, as detailed in *the UN World Program*, by collecting and presenting data, statistics and trends about youth to the United Nations Special Rapporteur.

We recommend at the regional level:

The rapid appointment of an effective and meaningful regional rapporteur to promote and monitor youth rights and to support the work of the United Nations Special Rapporteur.

- The appointment must be made by youth NGOs, IGOs and youth. In particular, the active participation of youth in the appointment process must be emphasized in order to give opportunity without restrictions of age, gender, race, or status within an organisation or due to the nature of the organisation.
- The regional rapporteur must develop reports and recommendations in accordance with

regional and international Human Rights documents.

We support the development of regional Human Rights documents for youth, such as those in the European, African, and Latin American, Carribean regions.

In addition, we urge at the national level:
The rapid development of national coalitions or councils of NGOs, IGOs, and youth where they do not exist, in order to promote and monitor implementation of youth rights as defined in regional and international documents.

- These bodies should be financially supported by governments and the private sector in the spirit of partnership with the NGO and IGO sectors as recommended in *the World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.*
- These bodies should appoint national rapporteurs to promote and monitor implementation of youth rights.
- The appointment process must ensure active participation of youth.

Special Event on Youth Rights (Recommendation # 30)

1. We urge the Secretary General of the United Nations to take the initiative of an *ad hoc* world event on Youth Rights;
2. The event should aim to bring together representatives of states and all interested national, regional and international youth NGOs in order to take relevent decisions to promote and extend Youth Rights.
3. It should be organised with the help of specialized United Nations agencies, relevant regional organisations and youth NGOs.
4. We suggest that this World event is a special session of the United Nations General Assembly or a United Nations World Conference on Youth Rights.
5. Our concern is that, at the onset of the third millenium, promoting and extending Youth rights is recognized as a way to ensure the progress of all societies.
6. It should be prepared at the national levels through campaigns to promote the largest possible involvement of young people so that their concrete needs are reflected in the event.
7. At the regional level, Youth NGOs and United Nations system should cooperate for proper preparations.
8. With this, we hope that a dynamic will be stimulated driving to, both, a real and large involvement of young people and commitments by governements towards Youth Rights.

ANNEX I

Statement of United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan,

To the third session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System

7 August 1998, Braga, Portugal

SG/YOUTH/1
7 August 1998

'ACT ON YOUR IDEALS', SECRETARY-GENERAL URGES YOUNG PEOPLE AT WORLD YOUTH FORUM

Problems without Passports Need Blueprints without Borders

Following is the text of United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan's statement delivered today at the Third World Youth Forum of the United Nations System, Braga, Portugal:

I am very pleased to be with you today. The global outlook that gatherings such as this can inspire is indispensable in today's world. The issues that will confront us in the twenty-first century -- be it the environment, drugs, pandemics, or sustainable development -- are issues that cut across all frontiers. This is the message the United Nations is trying to send to the world. Yet, too many people are still thinking in local terms, constrained by national boundaries.

By being here, all of you have shown that your generation can transcend such narrow confines and think in much broader terms. For that, I wish to offer you my sincere congratulations.

The challenges of our age are problems without passports; to address them, we need blueprints without borders.

Young people will be responsible for those blueprints in the next century. You are the leaders of the 21-st century. I am pleased that you have already started to think about how you will shoulder that responsibility.

President Kennedy once said that "the youth leaders of today are the youth leaders of tomorrow". I suspect that the jibe was unfair even in the days of the cold war. But what I am sure of is that your generation will prove it wrong. Many of you will take up real leadership positions throughout your lives in public service in civil society and in the private sector.

In this changing world of new challenges, we need, more than ever before, dedicated and talented individuals to enter public service. More than ever before, we need people like you sitting here today, to make the choice of service to humankind.

It is not an easy choice to make. Some of you may be put off by the perceived weakness of

public institutions of our day; some of you may be tempted by the immediate gains offered by the private sector.

To the first, I would say: joining a winning team is an easy option.

It is precisely when an institution, a cause, is struggling to find its way that it needs the support of the best and most courageous people.

To the second, I would say: the reward of working in the service of humanity goes far beyond material gain; it is the reward of knowing that one person -- you -- can truly make a difference.

My friends, you have already shown that rather than waiting for the future, youth organizations have an important task in working with governments in addressing the challenges of today's world.

You are, in fact, showing what it means to intervene to change the world for the better.

When we think of intervention, we tend to think of armies, alliances and organizations. But intervention can mean many things. Yes, a military alliance can intervene when instability threatens a region.

But there is also a more civic, peaceful, form of intervention.

Sceptics may say, what difference can young people like you make in the face of giant corporations, ecological threats and organized conflict?

I know that you can make a big difference. Take the International Campaign to Ban Landmines -- the driving force behind last year's treaty to ban the production, stockpile, export and use of these abominable weapons. The Campaign demonstrated that there are no limits to what civil society can achieve in partnership with governments.

A growing awareness among ordinary people, many of them young like yourselves -- a grass-roots movement of conviction matched by courage -- made governments acknowledge that the cost of landmines far outweighed the need to use them.

Propelled by the demands of citizens everywhere, promoted tirelessly by regional and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the elimination of landmines became truly a global cause.

How did they do it? One thousand NGOs in 60 countries were linked together by one unbending conviction and one weapon that would ultimately prove more powerful than the landmine: E-mail.

Or more recently, look at the role of civil society in advocating the establishment of an effective and just International Criminal Court. The NGO Coalition for an International Criminal Court brought together a network of hundreds of NGOs and international law experts to develop strategies and foster awareness. Their efforts paid off when we witnessed the signature of the ICC statute in Rome three weeks ago. Again, a key to their network was e-mail and the World Wide Web.

Thus, the information revolution has transformed civil society beyond all recognition. It has empowered it to be a true guardian of democracy and good governance everywhere. Oppressors cannot hide behind their borders any longer.

A strong civil society, bound together across all borders with the help of modern communications, will not let dictators hide -- a civil society that is driven by the subnational forces and bound together by supranational forces.

Young people, who have the skills to master the technology of the future and the energy to tackle the challenges of tomorrow, are the spearhead of that new civil society.

It stands to reason that the relationship between the United Nations and civil society has also had to change beyond all recognition. Under the reforms that I introduced last year, all substantive departments of the United Nations have designated NGO liaison officers to facilitate access to the Organization, thus bringing the UN closer to the people and the young.

At the country level, where appropriate, the United Nations system is creating more opportunities for tripartite cooperation with civil society.

Young people's voices will be heard. I promise you that. The General Assembly earlier this year adopted a resolution urging Member States to consider including youth representatives in their delegations to relevant meetings at the United Nations. I am pleased that the Action Plan you have adopted during this Forum will be presented to the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in Lisbon tomorrow.

At the General Assembly special session to combat illegal drugs last June, I made the point that young people hold the key.

I was presented with an action plan by a group of young people who work on the front lines of the fight against drug abuse. At their request, I circulated the document to the heads of all Member States of the UN.

In this fiftieth anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations equally depends on you, the young. Ensure those rights, which know no distinctions of race, nationality, creed, gender -- or, I might add, age these are truly the rights of all people.

Friends, the challenges seem endless. But so are the opportunities ahead of us. How to seize them has little to do with our origins; but it speaks volumes for our character.

I ask you to act on your ideals; explore new frontiers where older, wiser, more cautious people might not. Failure is part of success; if you don't fail now and then, it probably means you are not pushing hard enough.

Courage does not mean lack of fear, for only the foolish are fearless; it means doing things in spite of your fear. Confront those fears, take risks for what you believe, for it is only then you will find what you are capable of; you will discover that even though your opponents may try to hurt you, they can never break you. Go out and make your difference to the world. Boa sorte.

ANNEX II

Statement of His Excellency Mr. Jorge Sampaio

President of the Portuguese Republic

To the third session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System

7 August 1998, Braga, Portugal

I am very happy to be here today at this Forum, which brings together people from all over the world. I have always believed in the need to create the means which would allow young people to participate in the creation of freer, more democratic societies. The meeting which is now closing is an important step in this direction, as the conclusions we have just heard clearly illustrate.

Very often, *youth* is a mere pretext for rhetoric, which does not lead to real commitment in social and political terms. One speaks of youth, in the singular, instead of approaching young people directly as well as the variety of their situations. But we all know that young peoples' problems vary substantially from one country to another and even within the same country.

Market globalization should not make us forget the wide asymmetries which exist in the world. Fortunately, for many of you here, access to consumer goods and the basic needs is assured. I know that your thoughts are with the young people who live in poverty, in precarious conditions of hygiene and health, with no access to basic schooling. Everyone is aware of the positive developments of the last decades. However, we cannot ignore the existence of new forms of misery and social exclusion in today's societies.

The XXth century is marked by an unprecedented transformation in science and technology, but is also bears in itself evidence of violence and intolerance. A new century is now beginning, under the motto of communication, which is a unique opportunity to reinvent the idea of democracy and civic participation. But the revolution in civilization we are undergoing must not develop along lines which are not controlled by a democratic process. I am aware that he road is not easy, but I, for my part, will not give up the fight for a world in which everyone has the right to decide about his own destiny.

Although it is difficult to define the *age of youth*, there are three aspects I would like to point out:

- In the first place it is a temporary state, a passing condition. This *transitory* situation defines youth as a time of experimentation, individually and collectively.

I therefore believe that room must be made for young people to put into practice their own ways of being, establishing new ways to organize our cultural, social and political life.

- Secondly, allow me to remind you of this constant balancing between the "field of experience" and the "horizon of expectation" which characterizes human reality. In your case the dream is much larger than remembrance. Therefore, there is nothing worse for a young person than to wish to be something and not being able to make it come true. It therefore seems fundamental to me, particularly in the areas of education and employment, to create the conditions so that everyone can express their personal nature and fulfill their life projects.

- Lastly, we must not forget that it is in our youth that we acquire a voice able to speak on its own about our problems, to express a personal identity and to take decisions which affect the rest of our lives. Youth people should have the possibility to choose their path in a free, informed way.

Everything I have told you was meant to show very clearly the need for an education based on the most solid grounds. In an ever-changing world, which forces us to constantly adapt to new ways of life and different professional situations, education is the most important wealth each and everyone may possess. While increasing the scope of choices and options, it widens the boundaries of our freedom and makes our decisions more conscious.

Today's flows – of people, goods, capital and culture – are increasingly global, thus giving renewed importance to knowledge and communication. The development of international networks dealing horizontally with young peoples' problems could pay a decisive role in the celebration of a new *social contract*. A contract aiming at the reduction of inequalities and imbalances and a better distribution of existing resources.

Great causes begin with the smaller things in life. One of the main slogans of my generation was: *Think global, Act global*. Today, we possibly have to change that slogan around, because it is increasingly necessary to *Think local*, that is to say, to go back to the roots of our cultures and communities, and at the same time *Act global*, given that most of the problems can only be resolved on a world scale. That is what gives a greater significance to this *World Youth Forum*.

Each one of us speaks on the basis of his own universe of cultural references. My own personal history leads to me to value the principal of democratic citizenship. I believe that this is the path to the society of the future. The protection of the environment, the defense of human rights or the definition of fairer, more

balanced development processes are struggles that should be fought both on the local and the global level. They will only be won with a strong sense of solidarity and mutual assistance.

There can never be too much freedom. And it is not freedom which makes us forget our responsibilities and our commitments. However, I myself think that freedom is not only the right to free speech, it is also the existence of economic, health, educational and cultural conditions which allow everyone to participate in today's society.

I say *today* because, in the discussion about young people, there is, at times, "too much future". To anticipate and imagine what is to come is, no doubt, very important, provided that this reflection does not divert us from an active, day-to-day intervention in our society, nor prevent us from our everyday activity in favor of a more solidary, more tolerant Humanity.

Youth is not only the future, it is also the present. And this statement is, perhaps, the best way to put an end to a certain kind of misleading speech, which never ceases to glorify the qualities of youth, while at the same time forgetting their real situation and the role they could play in today's world.

In this Forum, I am a keen observer. I want to feel your problems and your attitude in facing them. I want to learn new ways of conceiving society and democracy with you. I want to see what you can do, individually and collectively, with that which the others wanted to do out of you.

Above all, I want to tell you that the Portuguese President is at your side in every cause which contributes to strengthen the bonds of citizenship and democratic participation, in all causes that help making Humanity more human.

United Nations E/CN.5/1999/13

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
29 January 1999

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Thirty-seventh session
9–19 February 1999
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development: priority themes: social services for all

Letter dated 29 January 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the document A/53/684 dated 19 November 1998.

I would be grateful if the above-mentioned document could also be circulated as a document of the thirty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development under agenda item 3 (a) (i).

(Signed) **Ngo Quang Xuan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* E/CN.5/1999/1.

99-02453 (E) 010299

United Nations

E/CN.5/1999/14

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
5 February 1999

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Thirty-seventh session
9–19 February 1999
Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups

Letter dated 5 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a letter addressed to you by Ismail Cem, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, concerning the Turkish Government's desire to organize the Second World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, together with the World Youth Forum and the World Youth Festival, in Turkey (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the thirty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development under an appropriate agenda item.

(*Signed*) Volkan **Vural**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* E/CN.5/1999/1.

99-03062 (E) 080299

Annex

Letter dated 1 February 1999 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the proceedings of the first World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth held in August 1998 in Lisbon, Portugal.

This Conference has been a very significant initiative on the eve of the twenty-first century, which we all cherish as a century of endeavours for global and rapid advancement in technology, social cohesion and economic welfare.

I am confident that these endeavours require hard work, knowledge, participation, dedication and concerted efforts. It is with these valuable assets that we can overcome the challenges of the next century and the next millennium.

The Lisbon Conference and the Declaration adopted thereat has shown the political desire and commitment of our Governments to improve the status of youth in all related areas of national youth policies, participation, development, peace, education, employment, health care and prevention of drug abuse.

We sincerely believe that the Declaration adopted at the conclusion of this Conference has signalled the beginning of an important new era for international cooperation in youth-related matters. We believe, therefore, that a result-oriented follow-up process has to be institutionalized. I am equally confident that the national Governments, regional organizations, the United Nations and the non-governmental organizations that have contributed to the drafting of the Lisbon Declaration will also be willing to cooperate in its follow-up.

As you will no doubt recall, young people played an important role during the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul, Turkey, in June 1996. They displayed their vision, energy, creativity and substantial inputs in the formulation of the Habitat Agenda, in which several items and paragraphs refer to youth and developmental issues.

Youth organizations in Turkey have sustained and further strengthened their activities and today they function as the global secretariat of the Youth for Habitat International Network to foster and coordinate youth contributions to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21. In this connection, this Network has successfully organized several meetings in Turkey, which focused on issues ranging from education to health care, the environment, vocational training and human rights.

Taking into consideration the wish expressed by several distinguished delegates to see the Lisbon Conference and the Youth Forum institutionalized, and inspired also by the successes of the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, as well as the Lisbon and Braga meetings, I have the honour and the privilege to confirm my Government's desire to organize the Second World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, together with the World Youth Forum and the World Youth Festival, in Turkey.

I kindly request, therefore, your good offices to facilitate the ensuing procedure, which requires the incorporation of a relevant paragraph into the next Economic and Social Council resolution on the follow-up to the first World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, to be further supported by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, under your able guidance.

(*Signed*) Ismail **Cem**